
From: (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)
Sent: Friday, November 16, 2018 7:05 PM
To: 'Emanuel, Mike'
Subject: RE: WAPO: CIA concludes Saudi crown prince ordered Jamal Khashoggi's assassination

Hi Mike,

Thanks for reaching out. We don't have any guidance to provide. You can note CIA declined to comment.

Take care (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)
CIA Office of Public Affairs
(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: Emanuel, Mike
Sent: Friday, November 16, 2018 6:40 PM
Subject: WAPO: CIA concludes Saudi crown prince ordered Jamal Khashoggi's assassination

Are you able to assist with this one?
Thanks.-Mike

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/cia-concludes-saudi-crown-prince-ordered-jamal-khashoggis-assassination/2018/11/16/98c89fe6-e9b2-11e8-a939-9469f1166f9d_story.html?utm_term=.0bda62328302

CIA concludes Saudi crown prince ordered Jamal Khashoggi's assassination - The Washington Post
www.washingtonpost.com

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman during a meeting at the United Nations in New York on March 27, 2018. (Amir Levy/Reuters)

Mike Emanuel
Chief Congressional / Senior Political Correspondent

Fox News

(b)(6)

mobile
bureau

@MikeEmanuelFox

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From: Greg Myre <(b)(6)> on behalf of Greg Myre
Sent: Sunday, December 02, 2018 7:08 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: Re: Wash Post and WSJ reports on MBS (b)(6)

Thanks, (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 2, 2018, at 6:07 PM (b)(3) CIAAct <(b)(6)@ucia.gov> wrote:

Hi Greg,

Thanks for reaching out. We don't have any guidance. You can note we declined to comment.

Take care, (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: "Greg Myre" <(b)(6)>
Date: Sunday, December 2, 2018 at 3:04:40 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct <(b)(6)@ucia.gov>
Subject: Wash Post and WSJ reports on MBS

Hi,

I just wanted to see if you were offering any comment or guidance on the Wash Post and Wall St. Journal stories about message between MBS and his aide.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/saudi-crown-prince-exchanged-messages-with-aide-alleged-to-have-overseen-khashoggi-killing/2018/12/01/faa43758-f5c3-11e8-9240-e8028a62c722_story.html?utm_term=.f0684f433c55

Best,

Greg

Greg Myre
NPR National Security Correspondent

(b)(6)

(c)
(o)

@gregmyre1

From: Greg Myre (b)(6) on behalf of Greg Myre
Sent: (b)(3) CIAAct Friday, November 16, 2018 7:15 PM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Washington Post on Khashoggi

(b)(3) CIAAct
Thanks, (b)(6)

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 16, 2018, at 7:13 PM, (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6) @ucia.gov> wrote:

Hi Greg,

Thanks for reaching out. We don't have any guidance. You can note CIA declined to comment.

Take care, (b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6)
(b)(6)

CIA Office of Public Affairs

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: Greg Myre <(b)(6)>
Sent: Friday, November 16, 2018 6:40 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov>
Subject: Washington Post on Khashoggi

Hi,

Do you have any comment or guidance on this Washington Post story about Khashoggi?

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/cia-concludes-saudi-crown-prince-ordered-jamal-khashoggis-assassination/2018/11/16/98c89fe6-e9b2-11e8-a939-9469f1166f9d_story.html?utm_term=.911201ff6526

Thanks,
Greg

Sent from my iPhone

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, October 11, 2018 8:04 PM
To: Riechmann, Deb
Cc: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: Re: WashPost:Turks tell U.S. they have audio & video recordings that prove Khashoggi was killed in Saudi consulate

Yep probably at same moment you did. Noted one writer was in Istanbul. Sorry we don't have anything, Deb.

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: "Riechmann, Deb" (b)(6) (b)(3) CIAAct
Date: Thursday, October 11, 2018 at 7:59:58 PM (b)(6)
To: (b)(6) <@ucia.gov>
Subject: Fwd: WashPost:Turks tell U.S. they have audio & video recordings that prove Khashoggi was killed in Saudi consulate

Assume you saw.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Lorenz, Brooke" (b)(6)
Date: October 11, 2018 at 7:39:54 PM EDT
To: "Lorenz, Brooke" (b)(6)
Subject: WashPost:Turks tell U.S. they have audio & video recordings that prove Khashoggi was killed in Saudi consulate

The Washington Post's Shane Harris, Souad Mekhennet, John Hudson and Anne Gearan report: The Turkish government has told U.S. officials that it has audio and video recordings that prove Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi was murdered inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul earlier this month, according to U.S. and Turkish officials. The audio recording in particular provides some of the most persuasive and gruesome evidence that the Saudi team is responsible for Khashoggi's death, the officials said.

"The voice recording from inside the embassy lays out what happened to Jamal after he entered," said one person with knowledge of the recording who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss highly sensitive intelligence. "You can hear his voice and the voices of men speaking Arabic," this person said. "You can hear how he was interrogated, tortured and then murdered."

A second person briefed on the recording said men could be heard beating Khashoggi.

The existence of such evidence would explain why Turkish officials were quick to blame Saudi Arabia for Khashoggi's killing. But Turkish officials are wary of releasing the recordings, fearing they could divulge

how the Turks spy on foreign entities in their country, the officials said. It's not clear that U.S. officials have seen the footage or listened to the audio, but Turkish officials have described their contents to their American counterparts.

READ THE FULL STORY: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/turks-tell-us-officials-they-have-audio-and-video-recordings-that-support-conclusion-khashoggi-was-killed/2018/10/11/119a119e-cd88-11e8-920f-dd52e1ae4570_story.html

Brooke Lorenz

Publicist

The Washington Post

O: (b)(6) M: (b)(6)

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(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

From: [redacted]
Sent: Friday, December 14, 2018 6:13 PM
To: Zachsdorfman; [redacted] (b)(3) CIAAct
Cc: Jenna McLaughlin
Subject: Re: Yahoo News—Urgent Request for Comment

Hi Zach,

Although I don't anticipate weighing in here, pls feel free to call me [redacted] (b)(3) CIAAct

From: "Zachsdorfman" [redacted] (b)(6) (b)(3) CIAAct
Date: Friday, December 14, 2018 at 6:05:04 PM (b)(6)
To: [redacted]@ucia.gov>, [redacted] (b)(3) CIAAct [redacted]@ucia.gov>
Cc: "Jenna McLaughlin" [redacted] (b)(6)
Subject: Yahoo News—Urgent Request for Comment
(b)(3) CIAAct
Hi [redacted] (b)(6)

I hope your Friday is going well so far. Yahoo News is preparing to publish a story on the apparent distance between the conclusions of the CIA and U.S. intelligence community and the White House regarding the responsibility for the Khashoggi murder, and the foreknowledge crown prince Mohammed Bin Salman had regarding the killing.

Current and former intelligence officials told Yahoo News that administration officials are misrepresenting the IC's analysis of MBS's role in the killing—that MBS was, in fact, apprised of the operation.

Sources also told Yahoo News that although the Khashoggi killing has strained U.S.-Saudi ties, the relationship between the CIA, GID, and Mabath remains close.

If you'd like to provide comment to the foregoing, please respond by midnight Eastern tonight; however, if more time is needed, please let us know and we can speak to our editors.

Many thanks,

Zach Dorfman

From: (b)(3)
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2019 6:33 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6) DNI-Media
Subject: Re: Year Before Killing, Saudi Prince Told Aide He Would Use 'a Bullet' on Khashoggi

CNN speaking with NYT author right now...

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)
From: [redacted]@ucia.gov>>
Date: Thursday, February 7, 2019 at 6:31:28 PM
To: "DNI-Media" <DNI-Media@dni.govmailto:DNI-Media@dni.gov>>
Subject: Fwd: Year Before Killing, Saudi Prince Told Aide He Would Use 'a Bullet' on Khashoggi

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Central Intelligence Agency
(b)(3) CIAAct

Sent from mobile

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)
From: [redacted]
Date: Thursday, February 7, 2019 at 6:25:28 PM
To: [redacted]@ucia.gov>>
Subject: NYT: Year Before Killing, Saudi Prince Told Aide He Would Use 'a Bullet' on Khashoggi (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6)

Year Before Killing, Saudi Prince Told Aide He Would Use 'a Bullet' on Khashoggi

By Mark Mazzetti<<https://www.nytimes.com/by/mark-mazzetti>>

* Feb. 7, 2019

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<https://www.facebook.com/dialog/feed?app_id=9869919170&link=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nytimes.com%2F2019%2F02%2F07%2Fus%2Fpolitics%2Fkhashoggi-mohammed-bin-salman.html&smid=fb-share&name=Year%20Before%20Killing%2C%20Saudi%20Prince%20Told%20Aide%20He%20Would%20Use%20E2%80%98a%20Bullet%20on%20Khashoggi&redirect_uri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2F

*

<<https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=https%3A%2F%2Fnyti.ms%2F2DYO5Oh&text=Year%20Before%20Killing%2C%20Saudi%20Prince%20Told%20Aide%20He%20Would%20Use%20E2%80%98a%20Bullet%20on%20Khashoggi>

*

<mailto:?subject=NYTimes.com%3A%20Year%20Before%20Killing%2C%20Saudi%20Prince%20Told%20Aide%20He%20Would%20Use%20E2%80%98a%20Bullet%20on%20Khashoggi&body=From%20The%20New%20York%20

Times%3A%0A%0AYear%20Before%20Killing%2C%20Saudi%20Prince%20Told%20Aide%20He%20Would%20Use%20E2%80%98a%20Bullet%E2%80%99%20on%20Khashoggi%0A%0AIntercepted%20communications%20of%20Mohammed%20bin%20Salman%20are%20the%20most%20detailed%20evidence%20to%20date%20that%20the%20crown%20prince%20considered%20killing%20the%20journalist%20Jamal%20Khashoggi.%0A%0Ahttps%3A%2F%2Fwww.nytimes.com%2F2019%2F02%2F07%2Fus%2Fpolitics%2Fkhashoggi-mohammed-bin-salman.html>

*
*

WASHINGTON — Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia told a top aide in a conversation in 2017 that he would use “a bullet” on Jamal Khashoggi, the journalist killed in October<<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/17/world/europe/turkey-saudi-khashoggi-dismember.html?module=inline>>, if Mr. Khashoggi did not return to the kingdom and end his criticism of the Saudi government, according to current and former American and foreign officials with direct knowledge of intelligence reports.

The conversation, intercepted by American intelligence agencies, is the most detailed evidence to date that the crown prince considered killing Mr. Khashoggi long before a team of Saudi operatives strangled him inside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul and dismembered his body using a bone saw. Mr. Khashoggi’s murder<<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/03/world/middleeast/khashoggi-saudi-journalist-istanbul.html?module=inline>> prompted weeks of outrage around the world and among both parties in Washington, where senior lawmakers called for an investigation into who was responsible.

The Saudi government has denied that the young crown prince played any role in the killing, and President Trump has publicly shown little interest in trying get the facts about who was responsible. Prince Mohammed, the next in line to the Saudi throne behind his ailing father, King Salman, has become the de facto ruler of Saudi Arabia and a close ally of the Trump White House — especially Jared Kushner, the president’s son-in-law and senior adviser.

The conversation appears to have been recently transcribed and analyzed as part of an effort by intelligence agencies to find proof of who was responsible for Mr. Khashoggi’s death. The National Security Agency and other American spy agencies are now sifting through years of the crown prince’s voice and text communications that the N.S.A. routinely intercepted and stored, much as the agency has long done for other top foreign officials, including close allies of the United States.

For the past several months, the National Security Agency has circulated intelligence reports to other spy agencies, the White House and close foreign allies about the crown prince’s communications. The reports were described by several current and former officials. Weeks after the killing, the C.I.A. finished its first assessment<<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/16/us/politics/cia-saudi-crown-prince-khashoggi.html?module=inline>> about the operation, concluding that Prince Mohammed had ordered it.

In the conversation, Prince Mohammed said that if Mr. Khashoggi could not be enticed back to Saudi Arabia, then he should be returned by force. If neither of those methods worked, the crown prince said, then he would go after Mr. Khashoggi “with a bullet,” according to the officials familiar with one of the intelligence reports, which was produced in early December.

American intelligence analysts concluded that Prince Mohammed might not have meant the phrase literally — in other words, he did not necessarily mean to have Mr. Khashoggi shot — but more likely he used the phrase as a metaphor to emphasize that he had every intention of killing the journalist if he did not return to Saudi Arabia.

At the time of the conversation with Mr. Aldakhil, Prince Mohammed was in the midst of consolidating power in the kingdom. Just months earlier, his father elevated him to second in line to the throne after Prince Mohammed plotted

the ouster of his predecessor<<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/18/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-mohammed-bin-nayef-mohammed-bin-salman.html?module=inline>>, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef.

In late 2017, Prince Mohammed ordered hundreds of influential businessmen and Saudi royals — some who had been considered contenders to the throne — locked up at the Ritz Carlton hotel in Riyadh, the Saudi capital, where they were interrogated.

Days before the conversation with Mr. Aldakhil, according to the same intelligence report, Prince Mohammed complained to another aide — Saud al-Qahtani — that Mr. Khashoggi had grown too influential. Prince Mohammed said that Mr. Khashoggi's articles and Twitter posts were tarnishing the crown prince's image as a forward-thinking reformer, and the criticism was more cutting because it was coming from a journalist who had once been seen as supportive of his agenda.

When Mr. al-Qahtani said that any move against Mr. Khashoggi was risky and could create an international uproar, his boss scolded him: Saudi Arabia should not care about international reaction to how it handles its own citizens, the crown prince told Mr. al-Qahtani.

Prince Mohammed also told Mr. al-Qahtani, according to an official who has read the report, that he “did not like half-measures — he never liked them and did not believe in them.”

Days after this conversation and the one about the bullet, Mr. Khashoggi wrote his first column for The Washington Post<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2017/09/18/saudi-arabia-wasnt-always-this-repressive-now-its-unbearable/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.30bcc0df62fd>: “Saudi Arabia Wasn't Always This Repressive. Now It's Unbearable.” It was a withering attack on Prince Mohammed's crackdown inside the kingdom.

“I have left my home, my family and my job, and I am raising my voice,” Mr. Khashoggi wrote. “To do otherwise would betray those who languish in prison. I can speak when so many cannot.”

Spokesmen for the National Security Agency and the C.I.A. declined to comment. In a statement, Mr. Aldakhil said, “These allegations are categorically false. They appear to be a continuation of various efforts by different parties to connect His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to this horrific crime. These efforts will prove futile.”

Officials at the Saudi Embassy in Washington, contacted on Thursday morning, had not commented by 6 p.m.

In December, The Wall Street Journal reported<<https://www.wsj.com/articles/cia-intercepts-underpin-assessment-saudi-crown-prince-targeted-khashoggi-1543640460>> that Prince Mohammed exchanged numerous messages with Mr. al-Qahtani in the hours before and after Mr. Khashoggi's killing, citing the C.I.A.'s assessment of the Saudi operation.

The Journal report did not give details about the messages, and officials have said that American spy agencies in many cases are able to capture only the date and time of messages — so-called metadata — not their content.

The Journal also reported that Prince Mohammed spoke with associates in August 2017 about luring Mr. Khashoggi from the United States to a third country if officials were unable to get him to Saudi Arabia.

American intelligence agencies have identified Mr. al-Qahtani as the ringleader of the operation that killed Mr. Khashoggi, and last year, he was put on a list of Saudi officials sanctioned<<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/15/world/middleeast/saudis-sanctions-khashoggi.html?module=inline>> by the United States for their role in the journalist's death. Mr. al-Qahtani is viewed in the kingdom as a brutal enforcer of the crown prince's agenda and has used an army of online trolls to harass Saudi dissidents on social media.

After Mr. Khashoggi's killing, the kingdom announced that Mr. al-Qahtani had been removed from his position as an adviser to the royal court. Saudi Arabia has since begun criminal proceedings against 11 individuals involved in the operation. Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty for five of them.

The kingdom has not released the names of the people on trial, and it is unclear whether Mr. al-Qahtani is among them.

Mr. Aldakhil, the other aide to the crown prince caught in the intercepts, until recently was the general manager of the Al Arabiya television network in Saudi Arabia. He is an influential media figure in the kingdom and a prominent adviser to the crown prince.

During the September 2017 conversation, according to intelligence reports, Mr. Aldakhil spoke to Prince Mohammed about luring Mr. Khashoggi back to Saudi Arabia with the possibility of a job at Al Arabiya. The crown prince was skeptical that Mr. Khashoggi would accept the offer.

Last month, Mr. Aldakhil left his post at the network. Saudi news sites have reported that he is expected to be named the next Saudi ambassador to the United Arab Emirates.

American officials said there is no evidence that Mr. Aldakhil had knowledge of a specific plan to capture or kill Mr. Khashoggi, and his name has never been among the suspects in the killing.

In the weeks after Mr. Khashoggi's death, classified evidence piled up that senior Saudi royals approved the Khashoggi operation, even as American officials insisted that there was no "smoking gun" directly tying the crown prince to it. The narrative from the Saudi royal court changed repeatedly, and the Saudi government has been determined to insulate the powerful crown prince from blame.

Most recently, Saudi officials have said that the operation was a kidnapping gone awry — that the team had been sent to Istanbul to forcibly bring Mr. Khashoggi back to Saudi Arabia but made the decision to kill him after he refused to cooperate. Saudi officials have said that Prince Mohammed had no knowledge of the operation.

In the latest indication that the international uproar over Mr. Khashoggi's killing will continue, the United Nations' special rapporteur on extrajudicial executions said on Thursday that she would urge the United Nations and its member states to take further actions "for the purpose of formal criminal accountability" of those responsible.

In a preliminary report<<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24143&LangID=E>> to the United Nations human rights commission, the special rapporteur, Agnes Callamard, concluded that extensive evidence indicated that Mr. Khashoggi "was the victim of a brutal and premeditated killing, planned and perpetrated by officials of the State of Saudi Arabia."

Late last year, Mr. Trump tried to blunt the outrage by issuing a statement saying that it was possible that Prince Mohammed ordered the killing, but the facts might never be known.

What was more important, the president indicated, was that the kingdom had pledged hundreds of billions of dollars of investments in the United States, including \$110 billion in arms purchased from Lockheed Martin, Boeing and other defense firms. Defense analysts say that the actual amount that the Saudi government spends is likely to be far lower.

With Democrats now in control of the House of Representatives, lawmakers are hoping for a sustained push for answers about who was behind Mr. Khashoggi's death. The House Foreign Affairs Committee is planning to introduce legislation calling for the director of national intelligence to produce a report to Congress identifying which Saudi officials helped plan the operation, according to two Democratic congressional aides.

In early December, Jim Mattis, then the defense secretary, told reporters, "We are doing everything we can to go down every rabbit hole to find what's there," adding, "We are leaving no stone unturned."

"I am quite satisfied we will find more evidence of what happened," Mr. Mattis said. "I just don't know what it's going to be or who is going to be implicated."

Sign Up for On Politics With Lisa

From: Jennifer Jacobs (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:) <(b)(6)> on behalf
of Jennifer Jacobs (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:)
Sent: Friday, November 16, 2018 7:01 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: Re:conclusion on Khashoggi killing?

Possible to get a comment?

Thanks,
Jennifer

From: Jennifer Jacobs (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:) At: 11/16/18 18:42:51
(b)(3) CIAAct [cia.gov](mailto:(b)(3) CIAAct@cia.gov)
Subject: conclusion on Khashoggi killing?

Able to say if this is accurate?

"The CIA has concluded that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman ordered the assassination of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul last month."

per the WaPo.

Thanks,
Jennifer Jacobs
Bloomberg News
(b)(6) cell

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, December 11, 2018 2:59 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct [redacted] (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: (b)(6) Recent Saudi Stories (b)(6)

Zeina Khodr?Verified account @ZeinakhodrAljaz<<https://twitter.com/ZeinakhodrAljaz>> 2h2 hours ago<<https://twitter.com/ZeinakhodrAljaz/status/1072554091149230080>>

CIA director Haspel to brief US House of Representatives leaders, some committee heads on #KhashoggiMurder<<https://twitter.com/hashtag/KhashoggiMurder?src=hash>> tomorrow

The CIA persuaded senators of Saudi prince's guilt. Kushner says no conclusion has been reached.<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2018/12/11/cia-convinced-senate-mbss-guilt-kushner-says-it-hasnt-reached-conclusion/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.ccabf68c04ff>

By Philip Bump
December 11 at 11:37 AM
Washington Post

Jared Kushner, son-in-law of the leader of the United States, appeared on Sean Hannity's Fox News program on Monday where he offered an indirect defense of his reported friend Mohammed bin Salman, the crown prince of Saudi Arabia.

Asked by Hannity whether the effort to contain Iran has been hurt by the slaying of Washington Post contributing columnist Jamal Khashoggi at the hands of people close to Mohammed, Kushner suggested the government would get to the bottom of the issue.

"I think our intelligence agencies are making their assessments," Kushner said, "and we're hoping to make sure that there's justice brought where that should be."

Kushner then segued into a discussion of his effort to achieve peace in the Middle East.

Hannity, of course, framed his question in terms favorable to the point he knew Kushner would want to make, emphasizing the United States had already sanctioned a number of Saudis for Khashoggi's slaying. That group overlaps with the people identified as responsible by Saudi government — in a transparent effort to shift guilt away from Mohammed.

Since shortly after Khashoggi went missing in early October, the White House, including President Trump, has relied on that argument offered by Kushner to deflect guilt from Mohammed: We do not yet have all the details. Day after day, as new information about the killing was reported, the line was the same: We do not yet know. Kushner and Hannity were speaking hours after CNN reported on a transcript of audio from the killing that included Khashoggi's last words — "I can't breathe" — undercutting to some extent the idea there was still a lot of mystery about what occurred. But still: gotta wait and see.

More to the point, Hannity and Kushner were talking about a week after senators were given a classified briefing by the head of the CIA — one of those still-assessing intelligence agencies — in which they were presented with evidence sufficiently clear enough about Mohammed's culpability that they competed to express to reporters how obvious the evidence was.

There was a “smoking saw,” Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) said, evoking the bone saw reported to have been brought to the scene of the crime by Saudi assassins.

“If the crown prince went in front of a jury, he would be convicted in 30 minutes,” said Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.). While Corker’s long been a critic of Trump, he is still a member of Trump’s party. For his part, Graham has been one of Trump’s most fervent allies on Capitol Hill in recent years. The evidence presented by CIA Director Gina Haspel was nonetheless strong enough to eliminate any question in Graham’s mind.

Kushner has certainly seen that evidence, as has Trump. It is not clear whether the CIA’s determination of Mohammed’s role is final, but there appears to be enough information included in its assessments to easily persuade members of the U.S. Senate of the crown prince’s guilt.

Concerns about Kushner’s relationship with Mohammed predate the Khashoggi killing. In March, as the prince was visiting the United States shortly after consolidating power in his home country, the Intercept reported Mohammed had told other regional leaders Kushner was “in his pocket,” a function of how closely Mohammed had drawn Kushner. The Post reported that same month on how Mohammed had tried to woo Kushner, apparently successfully. Over the weekend, the New York Times reported their friendship had included remarkable informality, including text messages back and forth.

The Times also reported “Kushner has offered the crown prince advice about how to weather the storm” following the Khashoggi killing, “urging him to resolve his conflicts around the region and avoid further embarrassments.”

Hours after Kushner spoke with Hannity, the distinction between the administration each serves and Khashoggi’s work was brought into sharper relief as Time magazine named Khashoggi and other targeted journalists as its person of the year.

Khashoggi’s “death laid bare the true nature of a smiling prince, the utter absence of morality in the Saudi-U. S. alliance and — in the cascade of news feeds and alerts, posts and shares and links — the centrality of the question Khashoggi was killed over: Whom do you trust to tell the story?” Time’s Karl Vick wrote in explaining the reason for the award.

That question alone shoves Kushner’s response to Hannity into a shadow. Who should be trusted to tell the story of the killing of a U.S.-based journalist at the hand of a foreign ally, a CIA director who can only offer evidence in a classified setting or the American equivalent of a crown prince seemingly dedicated to defending his peer? Should we trust our eyes and ears in evaluating the publicly available evidence and assertions, or should we trust what the convenient alternative the administration offers?

Kushner was not on Hannity’s show to talk about foreign policy. He was there to talk about a prison overhaul bill he and his wife, Ivanka Trump, have been championing for months. Before Hannity’s question about Khashoggi, Kushner explained what the bill hoped to accomplish.

“The recidivism rate that we have is way too high, and not doing anything about that is irresponsible,” Kushner said.

One way to encourage criminal recidivism, certainly, is to do nothing about it.

###

Time Person of the Year: 'The Guardians and the War on Truth'<http://www.phillytrib.com/news/time-person-of-the-year-the-guardians-and-the-war/article_1bf6e258-6f78-5889-81b9-3629b44562ea.html>

Jill Disis and Brian Stelter
Philadelphia Tribune (CNN)

Time magazine has chosen "The Guardians," a group of journalists who have been targeted for their work, as Person of the Year.

A series of four black-and-white covers highlights what the magazine calls "the War on Truth."

The group includes Jamal Khashoggi, the Washington Post contributor who was killed at the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul in October. This is the first time that a Person of the Year is a deceased person.

Another cover features Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, two Reuters journalists who were arrested late last year in Myanmar while they were working on stories about the killings of Rohingya Muslims, a minority population in Myanmar's Rakhine state. The two men remain behind bars. Their wives were photographed for the cover.

"The Guardians" also includes the journalists at the Capital Gazette, the Annapolis, Maryland newspaper where five employees were murdered by a gunman last June.

And the fourth cover shows Maria Ressa, chief executive of the Philippine news website Rappler. She was indicted last month on tax evasion charges — a case that free speech and civil liberties advocates have warned is part of a wider crackdown on dissent by Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's administration.

"For taking great risks in pursuit of greater truths, for the imperfect but essential quest for facts that are central to civil discourse, for speaking up and for speaking out, the Guardians" are the Person of the Year, Time editor Ed Felsenthal wrote.

Felsenthal unveiled the covers on the "Today" show on Tuesday.

"As we looked at the choices, it became clear that the manipulation and abuse of truth is really the common thread in so many of this year's major stories," he said.

President Trump, not coincidentally, was the runner-up for this year's Person of the Year title. Special counsel Robert Mueller ranked No. 3.

Time magazine has chosen "The Guardians," a group of journalists who have been targeted for their work, as Person of the Year.

TIME Magazine

On "Today," Felsenthal discussed the killing of Khashoggi and the reasons for the selections.

"This is the first time we've chosen someone no longer alive as Person of the Year, but it's also very rare that a person's influence grows so immensely in death," Felsenthal said. "His murder has prompted a global reassessment of the Saudi crown prince and a really long overdue look at the devastating war in Yemen."

Karl Vick, the author of the Time's cover story about "The Guardians," wrote that "this ought to be a time when democracy leaps forward, an informed citizenry being essential to self-government. Instead, it's in retreat." And "the story of this assault on truth is, somewhat paradoxically, one of the hardest to tell." -- (CNN)

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

From:

Sent:

Thursday, February 07, 2019 11:06 AM

To:

(b)(3) CIAAct

Subject:

(b)(6)

report

One week from today, President Trump must tell Congress whether he believes Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman is responsible for killing Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi. However, this is assuming that Trump respects a requirement from Congress. Senate Foreign Relations Committee leaders, joined by a bipartisan group of 20 other senators, triggered the required determination due on February 8, as mandated by the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act.

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

CIA Office of Public Affairs

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

From: Riechmann, Deb <(b)(6)> on behalf of Riechmann, Deb
Sent: Thursday, October 18, 2018 1:21 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct <(b)(6)>
Subject: (b)(6) SA

Is the White House preventing the IC from briefing congress on Khashoggi?

Deb Riechmann
National security/foreign affairs
Associated Press
(b)(6) (desk)
(b)(6) (cell-signal enabled)
(b)(6)

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(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

From:

Sent:

Wednesday, November 28, 2018 12:46 PM

To:

(b)(3) CIAAct

Subject:

Sen. Schumer Clip from Senate Floor Before Briefing

Clipped from below:

On Yemen, later this morning the Senate will receive a classified all-senators briefing from Secretaries Pompeo and Mattis on the conflict in Yemen, Saudi Arabia's role in that conflict, and the recent murder of US resident and Washington Post contributor Jamal Khashoggi. This is an important and timely briefing. But there's a gaping hole.

I am concerned and disappointed that President Trump has reportedly forbidden CIA Director Haspel from attending today's briefing. Without her presence at the briefing, there will be no one from our intelligence community. Director Haspel has heard the Turkish audio tape of the murder, and her agency has also reportedly made conclusions about the role of various Saudi leaders.

Members of this body have a right to hear from Director Haspel. No offense to Secretary Mattis and Secretary Pompeo, but it was the CIA that had jurisdiction to find out what exactly happened and according to press reports, they did. And now, Congress is not going to get a briefing from her. What is the White House trying to hide? Well, we all know that President Trump seems to favor the crown prince to an extent that he'll look the other way at the greatest of transgressions. But it's even a further step down the road of darkness, lack of sunlight, to prevent the CIA from giving us their conclusions. Members of this body have a right to hear from Director Haspel, and her absence today speaks volumes about the White House's intention for congressional oversight and Saudi Arabia.

President Trump has gone to extraordinary lengths to avoid criticizing the crown prince and the Saudis for the Khashoggi murder, drawing grotesque moral equivalencies and controverting well-known facts to avoid placing blame. It seems so similar to what he has been doing to Putin and Russia. Looking the other way for reasons that don't serve America's interest or security. It's been a shameful abdication of moral leadership from the President. It must give comfort to autocrats and despots everywhere. Go ahead, behave despicably and the United States, at minimum will look the other way and may even pat you on the back.

SEN. CHARLES E. SCHUMER, D-N.Y., SENATE MINORITY LEADER, DELIVERS REMARKS ON THE SENATE FLOOR, AS RELEASED BY SEN. SCHUMER'S OFFICE

* Print<javascript:;>

*

CQ TranscriptsWire

Nov. 28, 2018

-01

AS RELEASED BY SEN. SCHUMER'S OFFICE

SCHUMER: Mr. President, this weekend, President Trump will head to Argentina for the G20 summit where he's expected to meet with President Xi of China to discuss our trading relationship.

Now, I've opposed the president on most things, that's hardly a secret. But we actually agree on the issue of China. In fact, I agree more with President Trump's views on China than I did with either President Bush or Obama. And I have been supportive of the administration's aggressive course of action on China. China must be made to understand we are

dead serious about changing its behavior on trade: to allow foreign companies to compete in its markets, to end illegal dumping of cheap goods into our markets, and most importantly, to end the abusive practice of technology transfers and trade espionage that threatens our intellectual property and know-how.

These things don't just threaten our intellectual property in abstract concept. They threaten good-paying jobs, millions of them, and wealth, billions and trillions of dollars that China has stolen, literally and figuratively, through its unfair practices. When we have a good product, you can't sell it in China unless you transfer the technology. But they sell tons of things here. My late father-in-law, a New York City cab driver, sometimes said, 'we're not Uncle Sam, we're Uncle Sap.' Well in the case of China, that's been the case for too long. And President Trump, to his credit, is beginning to reverse that.

And yet, despite an initial wave of tariffs, China has not offered meaningful concessions on any of the items I've mentioned. United States Trade Representative Lighthizer recently put out a report concluding that China is still rapaciously stealing American intellectual property. In fact, the number of Chinese state-sponsored cyber-attacks have been rising. So we need to stay the course until China feels the heat.

That's why I was deeply disturbed to read this morning in the New York Times that President Trump and his advisers, at least some of them, are already considering backing down on further action against China in order to reach an agreement at the G20.

Let me be very clear to the president: backing off on China for some quick handshake agreement, without substantive, real, deep commitments will be seen as a victory by no one.

It will be seen as capitulation. It will be seen as weak, to cave on tariffs this early, before China starts to feel real pressure to come to a real, deep, and long-lasting agreement that's worth having. So President Trump, don't back down on China. American jobs, American wealth is at stake. You've headed out on a correct course but you have to follow through. All too often, this administration starts out doing something but backs off. It cannot happen. I am deeply worried, because I love America, and I want us to be number one economically, as well as in every other way.

I fear that President Trump's eagerness to make a deal - any deal - just like he did with North Korea in Singapore, will be devastating to the long-term interests of the United States. Now that we finally are putting the screws to China, we cannot relent for the sake of a photo-op at the G20. Yes, our actions will cause some pain. But in the long-term, there is much more gain than pain. And if we ever needed to do something, it's now. I don't agree with treating Canada or Europe the same as China, that's for sure. But China is a different breed of economic cat, and they are robbing us, stealing us, doing everything they can to become number one economically at our expense. Not in a fair, competitive way, but in a way that's one-sided.

Today, I'll be sending a letter to President Trump, with some colleagues, laying out this position, saying to the president, 'please don't back off on China.' American jobs, American wealth depends on it.

On Yemen, later this morning the Senate will receive a classified all-senators briefing from Secretaries Pompeo and Mattis on the conflict in Yemen, Saudi Arabia's role in that conflict, and the recent murder of US resident and Washington Post contributor Jamal Khashoggi. This is an important and timely briefing. But there's a gaping hole.

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President Trump has gone to extraordinary lengths to avoid criticizing the crown prince and the Saudis for the Khashoggi murder, drawing grotesque moral equivalencies and controverting well-known facts to avoid placing blame. It seems so similar to what he has been doing to Putin and Russia. Looking the other way for reasons that don't serve America's interest or security. It's been a shameful abdication of moral leadership from the President. It must give comfort to autocrats and despots everywhere. Go ahead, behave despicably and the United States, at minimum will look the other way and may even pat you on the back.

You know, we have strength for a lot of reasons, Mr. President; we have a strong military, we have a great economy, we have wonderful people. One of the reasons we have strength is we have been a "shining city on a hill." We have been the country that has guided doing the right thing in morality and try to spread that around the world. President Donald Trump is taking a giant step backwards and that's not just an abstract concept or something that would be a nice thing to do, it hurts us: economically, militarily, security-wise when we aren't that shining city on the hill.

Leader McConnell has rightly called the Saudi murder operation "abhorrent" and I hope he agrees with me that Director Haspel should be made available to Congress on this issue. I would ask him to join with me in asking her to come, in the same kind of closed skiff, intelligence protecting session.

Relatedly, possibly as early as this afternoon, we expect to have a vote in relation to the Lee-Sanders Yemen war powers resolution. Even though they're not here at the moment, I want to applaud its sponsors for their steadfast commitment to this important issue, I will support their resolution once again.

The conflict in Yemen, exacerbated by Saudi Arabia's intervention and its reckless tactics, must be brought to an end. The Yemeni people have endured unending suffering. The United States should once again be the moral leader and lead the diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict.

Finally, Mr. President, late this afternoon, the Senate will likely vote on whether to consider the nomination of Thomas Farr for the Eastern District of North Carolina. I've spoken repeatedly, last week, this week, on the floor about what an absolute disgrace it is to have his nomination before us. What a further disgrace it would be if our Republican colleagues march in lockstep to approve this awful nomination. Mr. Farr has been chief cook and bottle washer with North Carolina's invidious and despicable efforts to prevent people, particularly minorities, from voting.

Generations of Americans have agitated, protested, marched, even died trying to expand the right to vote, regardless of race or gender. Our soldiers, when they're fighting overseas, some of them making the ultimate sacrifice, are defending democracy and the right to vote, among other things.

For the Senate, in 2018, to elevate a man to the federal bench who has worked to limit the franchise and game the electoral system, would be a black mark on this body. A black mark on this body. And adding insult to injury, this is a judicial district that is twenty-seven percent African American. Two African Americans, both women, were not nominated in the past. The Republican senators from North Carolina blocked them with the blue slip, a practice that the Leader has abolished with Chairman Grassley, which is a shame in itself.

But to now elevate this man to the bench is an insult to African Americans and all Americans. All Americans. It's amazing to me, utterly amazing, and you see a lot of things around here that you don't believe these days, that the Republican majority is moving forward with this nomination.

I hope my colleagues on the Republican side, even at this late hour, take time to study his career. I believe they'll find he's unworthy of the federal bench. And I hope at least a brave few will join with Democrats this afternoon to reject this awful, awful nomination.

Add comment<javascript:;>

Partials for this Transcript

* Posted 12:35 p.m.

SEN. CHARLES E. SCHUMER, D-N.Y., SENATE MINORITY LEADER, DELIVERS REMARKS ON THE SENATE FLOOR, AS RELEASED BY SEN. SCHUMER'S OFFICE 01<<https://plus.cq.com/doc/transcriptswire-5421222?segmentLink=z53-20181128>>

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(b)(3) CIAAct

Central Intelligence Agency

(b)(3) CIAAct

[SEAL]

From: Hosenball, Mark J. (Reuters) (b)(6) on behalf of
Hosenball, Mark J. (Reuters)
Sent: (b)(3) CIAAct Saturday, November 17, 2018 8:33 PM
To: (b)(6) (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: Statement ?

Have you issued any public statement or comment re Khashoggi killing in response to latest news reports ?
Some confusion out there but insofar as i know you have not issued any such comment. Tks mh

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Morgan Chalfant [redacted] (b)(6) on behalf of Morgan Chalfant
Sent: Monday, December 03, 2018 4:26 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct [redacted] (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Hey [redacted] and [redacted]

I'm just seeing the Wall Street Journal reporting that CIA Director Haspel is going to brief lawmakers on Tuesday on the death of Jamal Khashoggi. Is there any chance you can confirm this and possibly provide any additional background information on the topic(s), timing, and parties involved in the briefing?

If you could get back to me as soon as you can I'd appreciate it -- also feel free to call me at [redacted] (b)(6) happy to speak off the record or on background.

Morgan

From: Demetri Sevastopulo (Financial Times-Washington Bureau Chief) (b)(6) on
behalf of Demetri Sevastopulo (Financial Times-Washington Bureau Chief)
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2019 6:53 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(3) CIAAct
Cc: (b)(6) Aime Williams

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Does the agency have any comment on the NYT story about MBS saying he would use a "bullet" on Khashoggi?

Thanks, Demetri

Demetri Sevastopulo
Financial Times
Washington Bureau Chief
Mobile: (b)(6)
Photography: [Instagram](#)

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From: DeLuce, Daniel (NBCUniversal) [REDACTED] (b)(6) on behalf of DeLuce, Daniel (NBCUniversal)
Sent: Wednesday, October 10, 2018 12:08 PM
To: [REDACTED] (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: update on Khashoggi case -- from NBC News (b)(6)
(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Hi [REDACTED]

I wanted to ask if you could provide some guidance on this case and the Turkish allegations.

Ken is out of the country so I am just following up. Could you speak briefly?

Thanks,
dan

Dan De Luce
National Security Reporter
NBC News

Cell: [REDACTED] (b)(6)
Office [REDACTED]

From: Katrina Manson (b)(6) on behalf of Katrina Manson
Sent: (b)(3) CIAAct Wednesday, October 10, 2018 8:51 AM
To: (b)(6) (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: urgent FT q following up Wapost report re US intelligence and Jamal Khashoggi

(b)(3) CIAAct
Dear (b)(6)

Greetings, hope you're well -- can you help with this?

May I check the Washington Post's report, which says that US intelligence intercepted communications of Saudi officials discussing a plan to capture Jamal Khashoggi before his disappearance.

It says US intelligence discovered the Saudis wanted to lure Khashoggi back to Saudi Arabia and lay hands on him there. It says US intelligence was not clear whether the Saudis intended to arrest and interrogate Khashoggi or to kill him, or if the United States warned Khashoggi that he was a target.

Did US intelligence come across discussions to capture Khashoggi?

Did the US warn Khashoggi he was a target based on this information?

Can you help with any further comment?

Many thanks,
Katrina

--

Katrina Manson

US Foreign Policy and Defense Correspondent
Washington DC
Financial Times

Cell (b)(6)
twitter: @KatrinaManson
instagram.com/katrinamanson

--

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(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

From: [redacted]
Sent: Friday, October 19, 2018 11:20 AM
To: DNI-Media
Cc: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: FW: Query from the Daily Beast re Rep. Castro accusation re Khashoggi/MBS

Just sending to DNI media as an FYI.

From: Ackerman, Spencer
Sent: Friday, October 19, 2018 10:25 AM
To: [redacted] (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: FW: Query from the Daily Beast re Rep. Castro accusation re Khashoggi/MBS

Forwarding to the general CIA media address per [redacted] OOO message.

-- (b)(3) CIAAct
Spencer Ackerman (b)(6)
Senior National Security Correspondent
The Daily Beast

(b)(6) mobile: Signal, WhatsApp, Telegram
[redacted] office
[redacted] encrypted phone
[redacted] (b)(6) encrypted email
Gchat: [redacted] (b)(6)
Skype: [redacted]
SilentText/Phone: [redacted] (b)(6)
Twitter: @attackerman

NOTE: All emails are presumed to be on the record unless and until a mutually accepted negotiation of ground rules has successfully concluded. Any unilateral declaration by recipient of this email that a conversation is on background or off the record will not be honored.

From: "Ackerman, Spencer" [redacted] (b)(6)
Date: Friday, October 19, 2018 at 10:24 AM
To: [redacted]@ucia.gov>, "Brian P. Hale" [redacted] (b)(3) [redacted]@dni.gov>
Subject: Query from the Daily Beast re Rep. Castro accusation re Khashoggi/MBS

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(3) CIAAct & Brian, (b)(6)
(b)(6)

On CNN this morning, Rep. Joaquin Castro of HPSCI made an allegation about Jared Kushner that implicated US intelligence in the Khashoggi slaying. Castro said he had seen "reporting that Jared Kushner may have, **with U.S. intelligence**, delivered a hit list, an enemies list, to the crown prince, to MBS, in Saudi Arabia and that the prince may have acted on that, and one of the people he took action against is Mr. Khashoggi."

For the record, did U.S. intelligence ever deliver, or aid in delivering "a hit list, an enemies list" to MBS or any other Saudi official?

Thanks,
Spencer

--

Spencer Ackerman
Senior National Security Correspondent
The Daily Beast

(b)(6) mobile: Signal, WhatsApp, Telegram
office
encrypted phone

(b)(6) encrypted email

Gchat: (b)(6)

Skype:

SilentText/Phone: (b)(6)

Twitter: @attackerman

NOTE: All emails are presumed to be on the record unless and until a mutually accepted negotiation of ground rules has successfully concluded. Any unilateral declaration by recipient of this email that a conversation is on background or off the record will not be honored.

From: Fisher, Jamie (b)(6) on behalf of Fisher, Jamie
Sent: Thursday, February 21, 2019 5:20 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Cc: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: Re: New York Times Magazine inquiry: Time-sensitive

Got it, thank you! Enjoy the rest of your week!

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Best,

Jamie

On Thu, Feb 21, 2019 at 4:54 PM (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6) @ucia.gov> wrote:

Hi Jamie,

As your first point is a matter of public record, I can confirm that for fact-checking purposes. For your second point, I would refer you to then Director Pompeo's public remarks (CSIS, Aspen Security Forum, etc). Beyond that, I'm afraid, I'm unable to assist. All the best to you and Mattathias.

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Central Intelligence Agency

(b)(3) CIAAct

From: Fisher, Jamie (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, February 19, 2019 7:38 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov>
Cc: (b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov>
Subject: Re: New York Times Magazine inquiry: Time-sensitive

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Thank you tremendously!

On Tue, Feb 19, 2019 at 6:49 PM (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6) @ucia.gov> wrote:

Thanks Jamie

We will follow up before your deadline

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Central Intelligence Agency

(b)(3) CIAAct

Sent from mobile

From: "Fisher, Jamie" (b)(6)
Date: Tuesday, February 19, 2019 at 3:41:06 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct <[redacted]@cia.gov>
Subject: New York Times Magazine inquiry: Time-sensitive

Hello,

I'm a researcher with The New York Times Magazine, cross-checking details for Mattathias Schwartz's upcoming piece on Sec. Mike Pompeo. Would you be able to confirm the following for us by Friday morning?

1. Pompeo was the first C.I.A. director appointed by the Trump administration.
2. As C.I.A. director, Pompeo often delivered Trump's daily intelligence briefing personally.
3. Gina Haspel first met Sen. Tom Cotton during the second term of the Obama administration, when Cotton went to London with Pence on an investigative Iran-related trip. At the time, Haspel's title was station chief.
4. Later, Pompeo would recommend Haspel to replace him as CIA director.
5. The weekend after Trump's inauguration, the transition team determined that Pompeo was better suited than the usual C.I.A. briefer to deliver Trump's daily intelligence brief.
6. The CIA has produced an assessment with moderate-to-high confidence that Mohammed bin Salman ordered the killing of Jamal Khashoggi.
7. During Mike Pompeo's time at the CIA, a number of his colleagues were gay and married.

Thank you very much! We go to press shortly, and would like to represent the agency with full accuracy.

Best,

Jamie

--

Jamie Fisher

Research editor

New York Times Magazine

(b)(6)

--

Jamie Fisher

Research editor

New York Times Magazine

(b)(6)

--

Jamie Fisher

Research editor

New York Times Magazine

(b)(6)

From: (b)(3) CIAAct Greenan, Robert J (b)(6) on behalf of Greenan, Robert J
Sent: (b)(6) Tuesday, February 19, 2019 7:35 PM
To: (b)(6) Palladino, Robert J (b)(3) CIAAct
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: New York Times Magazine inquiry: Time-sensitive

+ (b)(6)

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone. (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, February 19, 2019 7:05 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct J; Greenan, Robert J
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: Fwd: New York Times Magazine inquiry: Time-sensitive

Gents, flagging below for you and assuming you're aware already.

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)
Central Intelligence Agency
(b)(3) CIAAct

Sent from mobile

From: "Fisher, Jamie" <(b)(6)>
Date: Tuesday, February 19, 2019 at 3:41:06 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct <(b)(6)@ucia.gov>
Subject: New York Times Magazine inquiry: Time-sensitive

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Jamie

--

Jamie Fisher
Research editor
New York Times Magazine

(b)(6)

From: Rohde, David <(b)(6)> on behalf of Rohde, David
Sent: Friday, February 01, 2019 7:21 AM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: New Yorker piece
(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

No worries. Know you're busy. Hope you thought the piece was fair. If not, please let me know. Will be in touch as I continue write pieces for The New Yorker and work on the book, which is due on June 1st. My thanks to all three of you for your help.

Best, (b)(3) CIAAct
David (b)(6)

On Thu, Jan 31, 2019 at 9:41 PM <(b)(6)>@ucia.gov>> wrote:
Thanks David. Candidly, I have no idea how I missed your email Tuesday evening and apologize for doing so!

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Central Intelligence Agency
(b)(3) CIAAct

Sent from mobile

From: "Rohde, David" <(b)(6)> (b)(3) CIAAct
Date: Thursday, January 31, 2019 at 9:33:51 PM (b)(6)

(b)(3) CIAAct <(b)(6)>@ucia.gov>>, <(b)(6)>
(b)(6) <(b)(6)>@ucia.gov>> <(b)(6)>@ucia.gov>>
Subject: New Yorker piece

(b)(3) CIAAct (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)

It was great to meet you on Tuesday. I'm sorry we weren't able to connect yesterday. The story I wanted to discuss with you is below. Know you've had an incredibly busy few days. If you feel anything is incorrect or unfair, please let me

(b)(3) CIAAct (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) and (b)(6)

Thanks for your help with my book. If you feel anything is incorrect or unfair below, please let me know

Will be in touch with all of you if I have questions regarding future New Yorker stories or for my book. Thank you for your help.

Best,
David

Daily Comment

Is Trump Trying to Bully America's Intelligence Agencies Into Silence?<<https://newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/is-trump-trying-to-bully-americas-intelligence-agencies-into-silence>>

By David Rohde

[X]

On Tuesday morning, the country's spy chiefs filed into an ornate meeting room on Capitol Hill to testify at the Senate Intelligence Committee's annual hearing on the threats<https://secure-web.cisco.com/1cpgxK7FrCZmtYmQYGV7IMTGpJT0K5s3ZVZwKT2_rvLLBOW3tTbQ4z6svGbviW79Y4JA4SMJhoG3mRkE9ysbrJhGocKW9UOVpxOrEXM16qwFsCobdMc9bxa12vMktkmYB6d0k9xNo3wEx9c8bPh3spJZreJVEY_RVLYvbCL1ZmojTAM1dQz4e9tZe-NbGTILTVZ5fYeoKAJVMHc9Fvh3cPIPOHOoBLdSy4asrK8ecssVmbpqQDhEskeA-EjUn8D_MN_IIGmX_gmG0KvY_b8dMLuDCLTNiXYITjtS7aUboIfYDiv53PLdR3tEQVwc9h9Nrhau1BZG-cnNbaq2WdOV7kYSyKh36vhZLMOWz-Sm461oWnO4yHfHB0IKDe4_h00/https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dni.gov%2Ffiles%2Fdocuments%2FNewsroom%2FTestimonies%2F2019-01-29-ATA-Opening-Statement_Final.pdf> currently facing the United States. Dan Coats, an affable former Republican senator from Indiana, who is the director of National Intelligence; Gina Haspel, a career C.I.A. covert operative who now leads that agency; and Christopher Wray, a former federal prosecutor, who is now the head of the F.B.I., shook hands with the senators and became the focus of attention.

In the course of two hours, the three officials delivered carefully measured testimony that included pronouncements that would seemingly please the President. "While we were sleeping in the last decade and a half," Coats said, "China had a remarkable rise in capabilities." Wray concurred, noting that China has "blurred if not erased" the "line between lawful behavior and fair competition and lying and hacking and cheating and stealing." And Haspel said that the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi was the victim of "premeditated murder" but declined to state whether Saudi Arabia's crown prince Mohammed bin Salman<<https://www.newyorker.com/tag/mohammed-bin-salman>> was personally responsible.

But the three chiefs also quietly but clearly disagreed with the President. Coats stated that North Korea was "unlikely to completely give up its nuclear weapons and production capabilities," contradicting Trump<<https://www.newyorker.com/tag/donald-trump>>, who has claimed that it might. Wray said<https://secure-web.cisco.com/176ckqR80Xrs_yja1yNx0N2bcO6AUBnZpJubyrReONb9pzJJa7JU8OchVqBDK3zeTQWva7KdJy_f9Y8_HLYcGHawaUpEmzRcl_4A9oxftiFIV61va5QjFpA9UJHSpr_K07csB2NhOVWXR2b6_mosdjgGN3ZeEu44i4gN21eSYJp2bTyQBvnizQA pqtsuvUds0k_qis_xmF55YFDanBnf7uX9aL6_CEzaS8UsQSy4FxbCUvwk8K8EsCjE2OlcT8aqTrlyVFsjBGCVSRzaVT5JmZhNgCePvcBNNDTz6c8JlvzDIGrXvPZQrEfs0uNAwsKtZVQ04_Pxhjs6rSZcb-pDsNGTvrMSAN5OvWicUIThr5KJUUgSBqhe6JzcZMWxCn6s1B3vQrgMKQicRgmCIC0JA/https%3A%2F%2Fwww.c-span.org%2Fvideo%2F%3Fc4777167%2Ffbid-director-russia-continuing-interference-us-elections> that the Russians had used social media to try to interfere in the 2018 midterm elections, and were "continuing to adapt their model," contradicting skeptical comments that Trump has made about Russia's involvement. And Haspel said<https://secure-web.cisco.com/19GQAGjtLLwbOXlO_5NspUzmHnOzDcXTi2Xiu4UyyW3yFZ1PFegBySspdYjuEOftZUFbjk8Y8-LLayF0ekL7Tr5ekDaCeRbidIX3C-pOJyvZqfztoYxzIYVipg2GclySj5Bi8jbIF7-g8TD4GTO5XWzLiub_rFDjQRB0n7T3hLsmUWlvSkIh5X__MxZDEXy27CTIsG_8WXKEuwVTzH4oJFzXWzPAaJQ37tWRdiiHAHmfXEnXW7gzTwgVzsVyYYbqoDKb0kRRU4Du_C-N6wBtXmrn9Ovm5Z3HZgkP6CRMog16mMRbqiuZIYRwwcWlBA3x-SY9pcx8Mh6y6aUArdFlu98LoTBQ6Tptp-YUMvVJhARDTpSmbA83FK4z46hjuNOuTdxZkXTrP1R9oKIL3efFg/https%3A%2F%2Fwww.c-span.org%2Fvideo%2F%3Fc4777163%2Fcia-director-iran-technically-compliance-nuclear-deal> that Iran was technically "in compliance" with the nuclear deal that it had struck with the Obama Administration, contradicting claims by Trump that it is violating the terms of that agreement.

Midway through the hearings, news alerts that the intelligence chiefs were openly contradicting Trump's assertions started hitting mobile phones and television screens. On Wednesday morning, Trump was furious after seeing cable-television news headlines saying that the intelligence chiefs had contradicted him, according to CNN<https://secure-web.cisco.com/1FrMLAVhWRz-93izMBQ9wX6csc0yzrsrl7lgiPQ2hluO3OC8KZAYgGkp1qOrbCJmfe7j57gy9XplxEobowbcGfGcjfWeWZXCMaxP_3APEEeORgz uOp4F7YnIVSmAT5orjUDVvaYENRvYce5wXCu5oDEPeFiFGZW6lOoDxRAqYhajT62A8-

zj9ulsnoJa69_zegGBVEbv4GCL0oHh4iO9OM6JpD8shopA4TpR7T5fdJyqNt8m2F7AGa1s2FL4bzj1j2AZVSRQ0uZkntF55jjmv_V2611xOiTEgsgMr5SP7rtAAzMA47ydvitcVtdUio-9xaXKsyVVtWnYc_jhb4Vxo3C2ZNAIx5q_3FMBj0xxf7rG74DBkFYvTeWBuWmLFMMAl/https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cnn.com%2F2019%2F01%2F30%2Fpolitics%2Ftrump-dan-coats-rant%2Findex.html>, and he attacked them in two<https://secure-web.cisco.com/1CCa4H5PhcAY5WveUDNxJJ4vNZGib0ovdBeGPld_LbnQZCDv5mZTDvBugRbXxkY4bW8apvKhrAV_zBSHWOhMlfxR-n43CrQbAqtiOCAYOQ82hdAuAMAAw61Fy1nVp2sEds0jG2iu1UFjuSmNIL2aDeztvgIjfvJJbc7TLeQLYad-Aacd6vJplem7bmHRz_zUDjQBsQr-H0qTJW-lcQIU3dHKHy4HFOgX9L-X79Irhndeuaza5IYNNsTFmHGQFbJl7RcnyOZQYamKPsSLBLUjsl9wjGSx1KpArC0QLO09Oou8OUNpdJgLXqH0hljQNA1dQqRh98o0THtX-69JBSswfYIHYZtpBODDrz8IWxHr-JY/https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2FrealDonaldTrump%2Fstatus%2F1090608298343190528> tweets<https://secure-web.cisco.com/1-82EcZi6qRDXBXXCuO1TISovvm6SRLzRqkLf2TLhwq9U-3rXAUUVIO-lqBHaEV45ZrIP_XRQqz-qp4CaW482-9h6Hg93-QXLyIWxiYTYgHTiZD-j_fZWfdStq6-JIYuHL4ilVLgz8xf3-ba75bRagTovCAf8kl6ognC9IHgtbr39tHd6pOMKefZM0hpW4kUCmCx2eLibFzzHP7VPiMNH-OSeVQt1FFTWF_MS83_zGqpYW4qohN0y9wfrreyXVPZpTQL2hoA3zZEhWnlg_ONiWdaScd4CX-kLsT24iRG4s-WMUCNI_q8Ok9La85zeYOO6vy9DqONInbyQ-baRQGQDVMP6-_CHR4TEk2k9ew1GaHSA/https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2FrealDonaldTrump%2Fstatus%2F1090609577006112769>, without having seen their full testimony. “The Intelligence people seem to be extremely passive and naive when it comes to the dangers of Iran. They are wrong!” Trump tweeted. “Perhaps Intelligence should go back to school!” (On Thursday afternoon, Trump tweeted<https://secure-web.cisco.com/17IUP77qCLq_8R9OLWraBm_ljOC7dFTaCKysmMkPomOgUwRMb55Vh5TARPM8ZV54jPmwmYDc_FdKxtM0fY5mfNSxqftCNA3BXKX1guGwlRedh-gQd-YF6-b8cwHnYoZN6MZdBSopk1l-jGHXYV4jKzPvNKBcpPSqY9PmNbQEG-JRCzGgBpM3spgtdaghbXs1TT5jtpl_JZvTm1ltBINAsnJOH6XClvODDiBddKCITFSEc1CYl-pddaZZ2fH6_AifOFGZUaVLN9cDncDCjO3l3PpnlsRGkoBLfYM2ppVBGGlyZLmvN1GtivNRUR91HVVaCWNNfiNX92Kf5Sg47zOHmQcG71jrdc-CgK10ICGx0PAo/https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2FrealDonaldTrump%2Fstatus%2F1091088740947320833> a photo of himself meeting with Coats and Haspel in the Oval Office. He suggested that people read the “COMPLETE” testimony from the hearing, and blamed the media for putting out a “false narrative.”)

That twenty-four-hour cycle—from a two-hour hearing to two angry tweets—was the latest charged interaction in the fraught relationship between Trump and the intelligence agencies. In an unprecedented act for a sitting President, Trump has repeatedly accused members of the F.B.I. and other agencies of being part of a “deep state<https://secure-web.cisco.com/1nFO_RZMLm9kYsWN-TLwZ4-_Dpt9i8AdEVq0fI6bY7PdefDE09guC6fL0_qakiOjZRSfZoZd9J_WIDMdJmWkgIMv7lkt2WhOxihXvknELHM7zKU2968m-IYBnzxJECa21wpABP74g2Oq-AH8O6PoOfDMNntzwMK91m6-cSy8ft3rACbxwOYQ5pMlaW3saeiM0xzzr3gKJy5PmtG5XAWZd0o_1-p4ouCANLjzBCfXzjNmfiESSR19LzqCmct1moVOHu_utbpPiP4Hb9oBRhextfkuE7E-hcXIPqfALCuNrRDuO3RbYiBZdtyH68XgAjAoh5Xfz6kxmP3ydNsQCD9pXtHjLHRdcwnModzyCGKsEM/https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2FrealDonaldTrump%2Fstatus%2F999242039723163648>” that is trying to oust him from power. His critics say that he is blatantly pressuring the intelligence community to politicize intelligence by producing findings that match his political goals—mirroring a process that was blamed, in part, for the faulty intelligence assessments that helped lead to the invasion of Iraq during the George W. Bush Administration. But the President may also be trying to achieve something simpler: bullying the intelligence agencies into silence.

On Tuesday, James Clapper, who served as the director of National Intelligence during the Obama Administration, told me that the agency heads had spoken “truth to power,” which, he said, is the primary duty of intelligence officers. He also praised them for presenting their findings without flaunting their disagreements with the President. “I think that what happened today is proof positive that the intelligence community, two years into Trump’s term, is still doing its job,” he said.

Current and former intelligence officials warned that, within the community, Trump’s rancor is having an impact. Over all, one current senior official said, the community has “hunkered down” to stay focussed on the mission, and senior members try to avoid getting in the President’s cross hairs. The senior official told me that the leaders “of these agencies

are exhorting their troops to ignore the political swirl,” telling them to “just get on with your job.” But there is a growing sense that the President and his inner circle are rejecting intelligence assessments that disagree with their views. A former senior intelligence official told me that Mike Pompeo, Trump’s former C.I.A. director and now the Secretary of State, gave analysts “a lot of real pushback” when they told him, in briefings, that Iran was complying with the nuclear agreement. Trump has reportedly

<https://secure-web.cisco.com/1tDh_kfBrqozY222bXGKx_nku7NHlivXue2608mJalSmNyX-VWYVC0hkO0ojfVX41bJ5cCpl7uc1Fi_6FPIBsQislaPmienv9onJ7SWZ1Cgl2lq1zpObhiOUaB5aCsD9Z9BH2H95CfNnNCBDIQmz7KktQKKqfWwh4EaVglsVXhPsAYSEGX-VaqHOW-j73k5BLLWg3UnRy_n09OBx5dpCPzW3n5s3dIOde-kIKI5jp74KaJx_Lr3PmZ-u07kZhUb_W-FjAZ3ijetDIK_8MTV9kIS4FwsrNyXy3PnSj8GPBy--cNKwvQj7jEONZJww5fXyxSOMZY6UblfFIPcRYWZMJZcVreXwYWW_jS9Zj_INGeb66kbQUctHKvn0FTCLaCzT7/https%3A%2F%2Fwww.washingtonpost.com%2Fworld%2Fnational-security%2Fgap-continues-to-widen-between-trump-and-intelligence-community-on-key-issues%2F2018%2F12%2F11%2F23a02cb0-f8db-11e8-863c-9e2f864d47e7_story.html> taken issue with intelligence briefers on this topic as well.

In 2017, after transcripts of Trump’s conversations with several foreign leaders leaked to the press, intelligence-agency employees were required to attend seminars in which they were instructed on the damage caused by leaks. “With this President, the political pressure to go after leakers was incredible,” the former official said. More broadly, current and former officials say that a sense of caution has taken hold. Officials often take painstaking efforts to insure that none of their actions can be interpreted as being political—by Trump’s supporters or by his opponents—and that they will not somehow be penalized for their actions in the future. The current senior official said that this caution has not yet resulted in self-censorship within the agencies. “People are extra careful to be nonpolitical,” the official said. “People are doing what they’re doing, they’re just dotting every ‘I’ and crossing every ‘T.’ ”

Yet the former official believes that the feeling that the President and his advisers may dismiss the community’s findings is resulting in a rote production of intelligence. “There is a certain sense of people going through the motions and doing things for the record,” that official told me, because “if the President isn’t interested in the intelligence there is little incentive to go above and beyond and think outside of the box.” The implicit risk is that the community could fail to anticipate the emergence of new threats, as it has been accused of doing before 9/11 and during the 2016 election.

Clapper, however, disagreed with this assessment, saying that, for now, he doesn’t think that the analysts have succumbed to political pressure. “I imagine now they are going to be very careful when they’re writing about Russia, or North Korea’s nuclear program,” he said. “I’m sure they’re still writing that stuff. Institutionally, there are too many checks and balances.”

Trump’s efforts to pressure the agencies are particularly unusual, though, because they are public. C.I.A. analysts said that Bush Administration officials accused them of trying to sabotage the President’s policies

<https://secure-web.cisco.com/1Hxo3g_PFivV8DkHWE21PNOSWrGlnMZ644zPfvW-jzgGSiBOMT-Q4n4_4B3kmyZwC4amhAKTpK4I6sscZm6EOxFF5srudj3xvmg5PZAIOMvo3oxZSLifGqisuEsgwrJz0KclgB6mhRGmPhyctY7A1mvZZvrgFE-rpqT4KFWck5ARtgq48cPunz_JVNwQril-eCGWVB1a3jpC-7cNA2u73LfYhMk-aMzUtcDUGpAxJBpc3M03zBgEqNAF0uNzLPcv1_bqFJaQd6FkPtm4eVHPCXG_oWX0dYbug0o8gZ60ECOY3pC4BEG_HvHZg9AjrSV8fZ2Az3iFxoIIIOAGZvp6tDLAZOhD5xoKgYyfp6okqy8vr7-AqtT1LCrWbWxddNCJ/https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nytimes.com%2F2006%2F02%2F11%2Fworld%2Fmiddleeast%2Fexcia-official-says-iraq-data-was-distorted.html> when they questioned intelligence reports that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, but the Administration did so in private. Clapper said that Obama never commented, publicly or privately, about testimony that Clapper gave before Congress. “He never said, ‘I’d like you to soft-pedal this, or not that say that.’ Not once.”

The current and former officials, as well Clapper, told me that they are most concerned about the long-term impact of the President’s claims that the F.B.I. and C.I.A. are part of the deep state. They worry that such statements will fuel a decline in the willingness of Americans to work for intelligence agencies. “The whole gutting of the institution” is possible, the former official said. “What kind of talent will we attract in the future? That is a huge concern.”

Clapper said that he isn't sure the community can withstand the political pressure in the long term. But, he said, for now, it is performing as it should. "Intelligence people are mindful of history. 'How will what I write be reflected in the history books? Did I continue to tell the truth?' The intelligence community will continue to speak truth to power even when the power ignores the truth."

On Tue, Jan 29, 2019 at 7:53 PM Rohde, David <[REDACTED]> (b)(6)

wrote:

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6) [REDACTED]

Great to meet you today at the hearing. I have a quick follow-up question for a piece I'm writing for The New Yorker website tomorrow. Know you are busy. Would it be possible for me to give you a call tomorrow? Thanks.

Best,
David

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: (b)(3) CIAAct
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2018 7:44 AM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: (b)(6) Re: News Alert: Saudi Arabia says Khashoggi's killing was premeditated, reversing earlier statement that the journalist had died in fistfight

Thanks

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: [redacted]@ucia.gov>>
Date: Thursday, October 25, 2018 at 7:19:43 AM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct [redacted]@ucia.gov>>
Subject: Fwd: News Alert: Saudi Arabia says Khashoggi's killing was premeditated, reversing earlier statement that the journalist had died in fistfight

----- Original Message -----

From: The Washington Post <email@washingtonpost.com<mailto:email@washingtonpost.(b)(3) CIAAct
Date: Thu, Oct 25, 2018, 6:56 AM (b)(6)
To: [redacted]@ucia.gov>>
Subject: News Alert: Saudi Arabia says Khashoggi's killing was premeditated, reversing earlier statement that the journalist had died in fistfight

Saudi Arabia's public prosecutor said that Jamal Khashoggi was killed in a planned operation, based on information it received from Turkish investigators in Istanbul, according to a statement from the kingdom's Foreign Ministry. It is the latest reversal from Saudi authorities, who last week said Khashoggi was killed accidentally in a fistfight at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul by "rogue" agents.

[The Washington
Post]<<https://s2.washingtonpost.com/2df95/5bd1a0cce6e81b374697c49e/YnJpdHRhbWJAdWNpYS5nb3Y%3D/0/10/85a76eec819387d52975cd01d9f38950>>
Democracy Dies in Darkness

News Alert Oct 25, 6:54 AM

Saudi Arabia says Khashoggi's killing was premeditated, reversing earlier statement that the journalist had died in fistfight<<https://s2.washingtonpost.com/ca01fe/5bd1a0cce6e81b374697c49e/YnJpdHRhbWJAdWNpYS5nb3Y%3D/1/10/85a76eec819387d52975cd01d9f38950>>

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[<http://li.washingtonpost.com/imp?s=130185&sz=1x1&li=transactional&m=88ec17cfb0f1d2b9de774604c5043eb1&p=5bd1a0cce6e81b374697c49e>]

[<http://li.washingtonpost.com/imp?s=130186&sz=1x1&li=transactional&m=88ec17cfb0f1d2b9de774604c5043eb1&p=5bd1a0cce6e81b374697c49e>]

[<http://li.washingtonpost.com/imp?s=1909&sz=116x15&li=transactional&m=88ec17cfb0f1d2b9de774604c5043eb1&p=5bd1a0cce6e81b374697c49e>]<<http://li.washingtonpost.com/click?s=1909&sz=116x15&li=transactional&m=88ec17cfb0f1d2b9de774604c5043eb1&p=5bd1a0cce6e81b374697c49e>>

[<http://li.washingtonpost.com/imp?s=95919&sz=69x15&li=transactional&m=88ec17cfb0f1d2b9de774604c5043eb1&p=5bd1a0cce6e81b374697c49e>]

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[<http://li.washingtonpost.com/imp?s=123798102&sz=2x1&li=transactional&m=88ec17cfb0f1d2b9de774604c5043eb1&p=5bd1a0cce6e81b374697c49e>]

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[http://li.washingtonpost.com/imp?s=123798110&sz=2x1&li=transactional&m=88ec17cfb0f1d2b9de774604c5043eb1&p=5bd1a0cce6e81b374697c49e]
[http://li.washingtonpost.com/imp?s=123798111&sz=2x1&li=transactional&m=88ec17cfb0f1d2b9de774604c5043eb1&p=5bd1a0cce6e81b374697c49e]
[http://li.washingtonpost.com/imp?s=123798112&sz=2x1&li=transactional&m=88ec17cfb0f1d2b9de774604c5043eb1&p=5bd1a0cce6e81b374697c49e]
[http://li.washingtonpost.com/imp?s=123798113&sz=2x1&li=transactional&m=88ec17cfb0f1d2b9de774604c5043eb1&p=5bd1a0cce6e81b374697c49e]
[http://li.washingtonpost.com/imp?s=123798114&sz=2x1&li=transactional&m=88ec17cfb0f1d2b9de774604c5043eb1&p=5bd1a0cce6e81b374697c49e]
[http://li.washingtonpost.com/imp?s=123798115&sz=2x1&li=transactional&m=88ec17cfb0f1d2b9de774604c5043eb1&p=5bd1a0cce6e81b374697c49e]
[http://li.washingtonpost.com/imp?s=123798116&sz=2x1&li=transactional&m=88ec17cfb0f1d2b9de774604c5043eb1&p=5bd1a0cce6e81b374697c49e]
[http://li.washingtonpost.com/imp?s=123798117&sz=2x1&li=transactional&m=88ec17cfb0f1d2b9de774604c5043eb1&p=5bd1a0cce6e81b374697c49e]
[http://li.washingtonpost.com/imp?s=123798118&sz=2x1&li=transactional&m=88ec17cfb0f1d2b9de774604c5043eb1&p=5bd1a0cce6e81b374697c49e]
[http://li.washingtonpost.com/imp?s=123798119&sz=2x1&li=transactional&m=88ec17cfb0f1d2b9de774604c5043eb1&p=5bd1a0cce6e81b374697c49e]

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2019 7:06 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAActylie
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: Re: NYT report?

Not going to change sorry (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

[redacted]
Central Intelligence Agency
(b)(3) CIAAct

Sent from mobile

From: "Atwood, Kylie" <[redacted] (b)(6)>
Date: Thursday, February 7, 2019 at 6:59:18 PM
To: [redacted] <[redacted]@ucia.gov> (b)(3) CIAAct
Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@ucia.gov> (b)(6)
Subject: Re: NYT report?

Got you. Do you think that will change or not likely to change?

Kylie Atwood (b)(3) CIAAct
CNN National Security Reporter
Cell: [redacted] (b)(6)

From: [redacted]
Date: Thursday, February 7, 2019 at 6:58 PM
To: "Atwood, Kylie"
Cc: (b)(3) CIAAct [redacted]
Subject: Re: NYT report?
Hi Kylie,

Thanks for reaching out. I'm sorry, but we don't have any guidance.

Best,
(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

[redacted]
Central Intelligence Agency
(b)(3) CIAAct

Sent from mobile

From: "Atwood, Kylie" <[redacted] (b)(6)>
Date: Thursday, February 7, 2019 at 6:56:21 PM

(b)(6)

To: '[redacted]@ucia.gov>

Subject: NYT report?

Hey [redacted] – Does the CIA have a comment on the NYT report that US intelligence intercepted a 2017 conversation in which Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman told a top aide that he would use “a bullet” on Khashoggi if he did not come back to Saudi Arabia and stop criticizing the kingdom? Is this true?

Thanks, Kylie

Kylie Atwood

CNN National Security Reporter

Cell, Signal, WhatsApp: [redacted] (b)(6)

Office: [redacted] (b)(6)

Email: [redacted]



(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

From:

Sent:

Monday, November 12, 2018 6:19 PM

To:

DNI-Media; [redacted]

(b)(3) CIAAct

Subject:

Re: Planned NY Story on North Korea

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/12/world/middleeast/jamal-khashoggi-killing-saudi-arabia.html>

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

[redacted]

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

From: [redacted]@ucia.gov>

Date: Saturday, November 10, 2018 at 3:36:47 PM

To: "DNI-Media" <DNI-Media@dni.gov>, (b)(3) CIAAct [redacted]@ucia.gov>

Subject: Planned NY Story on North Korea

Forwarding FYSA since Sanger said they'd take comment from ODNI and/or CIA. CIA is declining.

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

[redacted]

From: "David Sanger" [redacted] (b)(6)

Date: Saturday, November 10, 2018 at 3:15:24 PM

To: (b)(3) CIAAct [redacted]@ucia.gov>

Subj: (b)(6)ur story

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

[redacted]

Good to talk to you yesterday.

It looks like our story delineating 16 missile bases, including some that have been improved upon or added to while the North is talking about dismantling older bases, will likely be posted tomorrow and appear in Monday's print editions.

Our mutual friends in the intel world tell me there is nothing new about these sites to the intel community; some date back decades. But they have not been publicly discussed or revealed, and their import today is that they

may part of a shell game in which the North makes a public show of dismantlement, while building capability elsewhere. Nothing we haven't seen before.

We'd happily take any comment from CIA, or DNI, that you folks would want to offer. The story will include some of the commercial satellite imagery.

best,
David

On Fri, Nov 9, 2018 at 3:30 PM (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6) <[redacted]@ucia.gov> wrote:

Great to chat with you

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Central Intelligence Agency

(b)(3) CIAAct



CENTRAL
INTELLIGENCE
AGENCY

THE WORK OF A NATION.
THE CENTER OF INTELLIGENCE.

--
[redacted]

From: Andrzejczak Gazis, Olivia (b)(6) on behalf of Andrzejczak Gazis, Olivia
Sent: (b)(3) CIAAct Saturday, November 17, 2018 11:54 AM
To: (b)(6) (b)(3) CIAAct
Cc:
Subject: Re: POTUS on briefing

Sorry, adding also, for clarity - a question regarding Trump's comment "we haven't been briefed yet."

Assumption is POTUS has been consistently briefed on this matter but please let us know if that is not the case.

> On Nov 17, 2018, at 11:46 AM, Andrzejczak Gazis, Olivia <(b)(3) CIAAct> wrote:

>

> Hello,

>

> CBS requests comment/guidance on President Trump's comments this morning regarding MBS - Specifically, he indicated he would be briefed by the CIA on Air Force One and said that "as of this moment we were told that he [MBS] did not play a role."

>

> Two officials have told CBS News the agency has intelligence substantiating an assessment that MBS ordered the killing of Jamal Khashoggi.

>

> Appreciate the help, especially on the weekend.

>

> Olivia

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

From: [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, November 27, 2018 1:08 PM
To: 'Dorothy Parvaz (TP)'
Subject: RE: President Trumps relationship with the intelligence community -- reporter seeking comment

You are hilarious. Call me, maybe? [redacted] (b)(3) CIAAct

From: Dorothy Parvaz (TP) [redacted] (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, November 27, 2018 1:01 PM
To: [redacted]@ucia.gov>
Subject: Re: President Trumps relationship with the intelligence community -- reporter seeking comment

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

In lieu of flowers, please just tell me this: Does the president still take direct briefings from analysts? Or do the reports go through Bolton?

Best,

D.

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: [redacted]@ucia.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 27, 2018 12:13:40 PM
To: Dorothy Parvaz (TP)
Subject: RE: President Trumps relationship with the intelligence community -- reporter seeking comment

Hi, D.

I'm so sorry. I was hoping to get you something before your deadline. I hope you've avoided grievous bodily harm. If I'm able to make anything happen, I will reach out to you. All the best. [redacted]

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: Dorothy Parvaz (TP) <[redacted] (b)(6)>
Sent: Tuesday, November 27, 2018 9:49 AM
To: [redacted]@ucia.gov>
Subject: Re: President Trumps relationship with the intelligence community -- reporter seeking comment

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

Good morning --

Any hope of getting a response for the piece?

Best,

D.

From: Dorothy Parvaz (TP)
Sent: Monday, November 26, 2018 5:27:33 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: President Trumps relationship with the intelligence community -- reporter seeking comment

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

Much thanks!

Get Outlook for Android<<https://aka.ms/ghei36>>

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

From: [REDACTED]@cia.gov
Sent: Monday, November 26, 2018 5:26:29 PM
To: Dorothy Parvaz (TP)
Cc: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: RE: President Trumps relationship with the intelligence community -- reporter seeking comment

Well we certainly don't want you to be harmed! Ok I'll check in with you tomorrow. Best, [REDACTED] (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: Dorothy Parvaz (TP) <[REDACTED] (b)(6)>
Sent: Monday, November 26, 2018 5:20 PM
To: [REDACTED]@cia.gov
Subject: Re: President Trumps relationship with the intelligence community -- reporter seeking comment

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

Hello -- I can push it until noon before I face grievous bodily harm.

Best,

D.

_____(b)(3) CIAAct_____
(b)(6)

From: [redacted]@ucia.gov>

Sent: Monday, November 26, 2018 5:18:02 PM

To: Dorothy Parvaz (TP)

Subject: RE: President Trumps relationship with the intelligence community -- reporter seeking comment

Hi D., What's your deadline tomorrow morning? Very Best. _____(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: Dorothy Parvaz (TP) [redacted](b)(6)

Sent: Monday, November 26, 2018 12:24 PM

To: [redacted]2@ucia.gov>,(b)(3) CIAAct [redacted]@ucia.gov>

Subject: Re: President Trumps relationship with the intelligence community -- reporter seeking comment

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Terrific -- much thanks. And if anyone there would care to throw in a comment on whether the agency issues statements based on a "feeling" I'd be happy to include that too.

Best,

D.

_____(b)(3) CIAAct_____
(b)(6)

From: [redacted]@ucia.gov>

Sent: Monday, November 26, 2018 12:05:20 PM

To: Dorothy Parvaz (TP); [redacted](b)(3) CIAAct

Subject: RE: President Trumps relationship with the intelligence community -- reporter seeking comment

Hi D.,

Thanks for reaching out. We will follow up with you before your deadline.

Best,

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Central Intelligence Agency

(b)(3) CIAAct

From: Dorothy Parvaz (TP) <(b)(6)>
Sent: Monday, November 26, 2018 11:48 AM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct@cia.gov
Subject: President Trumps relationship with the intelligence community -- reporter seeking comment

Good morning --

I'm D. Parvaz, Global Politics reporter at ThinkProgress, working on a piece looking at what appears to be the fraught relationship between President Trump and his intelligence agencies.

While I don't think anyone would expect a president (or anyone, really) to just accept whatever intelligence agencies say without question, it does seem as though President Trump has a uniquely contentious relationship with the agencies, and, in the case of the FBI, those who head them.

I'm looking at two main areas of query for this piece:

* How unprecedented is this? Do we just know more about how President Trump feels about CIA & FBI intel because of his tendencies to either tweet what he's thinking or speak off the cuff at press conferences? Or is his response unique? I'm thinking of his very public dismissal of what the U.S.'s own intelligence said about Iran (no nuclear weapon....well...yet), on Russia (on elections meddling), on Saudi Arabia (on MBS's role in Khashoggi's murder), on seemingly ignoring FBI warnings on the rise of violent white supremacists, etc.

* I'm also wondering about the consequences of this stance: Will this weaken the efficacy of these agencies? Will it change public response by sowing more distrust? Will it embolden foreign actors to misbehave, knowing that if they have a close enough bilateral relationship with the president (or some other kind of direct line to him), that they can essentially do whatever they want, no matter what the FBI and the CIA say?

I'm hoping you have someone there who can give me a statement on where the CIA stands on the issues outlined above because from where the rest of us are (out here, in the cheap seats) this seems to be a whole new ballgame. I need to file this piece by tomorrow morning.

Best,

D.

From: Hosenball, Mark J. (Reuters) [redacted] (b)(6) > on behalf of
Hosenball, Mark J. (Reuters)
Sent: Monday, January 07, 2019 3:38 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct [redacted]
Subject: (b)(6) Re: Qahtani

Will phone in a minute but now seeing this too:

Khashoggi trial: Mystery as key suspect and former top royal adviser disappears from public eye
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/named-as-a-key-saudi-suspect-in-khashoggi-killing-top-royal-adviser-drops-out-of-sight/2019/01/06/2aed0cae-0790-11e9-8942-0ef442e59094_story.html?utm_term=.a34566c5eb9c
Saud al-Qahtani was heavily involved in the government's arrests of critics and rivals to Prince bin Salman, and alleged torture of detainees

Authorities in Saudi Arabia will not say what has become of Saud al-Qahtani, a powerful royal adviser who Saudi prosecutors allege played a major role in the events that led to Jamal Khashoggi's killing in Istanbul three months ago.

In the seven weeks since the government said he was under investigation, only rumours have filled the silence. He was spotted recently in the coastal city of Jiddah, a resident said, and in the offices of the royal court in the capital, Riyadh, according to a person who works with the government.

Other accounts put Mr Qahtani, once a top aide to Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, in a remote corner of the kingdom, laying low.

The government's treatment of Mr Qahtani is being closely watched in Washington and other foreign capitals as a test of whether Saudi Arabia is sincere about prosecuting everyone found to be involved in Mr Khashoggi's killing, including senior officials.

(b)(3) CIAAct
Get Outlook for iOS (b)(6)

From: [redacted]
Sent: Monday, January 7, 2019 2:59:09 PM
To: Hosenball, Mark J. (Reuters)
Subject: RE: Qahtani

Hi Mark,

I just gave you a call, but I missed you. Please feel free to call me at (b)(3) CIAAct [redacted]

Thanks, [redacted]

From: Hosenball, Mark J. (Reuters)
Sent: Monday, January 07, 2019 11:53 AM (b)(3) CIAAct
To: [redacted] (b)(6)
Cc: [redacted] (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: RE: Qahtani
Brilliant many tks mh (b)(3) CIAAct

From: [redacted] (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, January 07, 2019 11:52 AM
To: Hosenball, Mark J. (Reuters)
(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Approved for Release: 2019/08/02 C06814774

Cc: [redacted] (b)(3) CIAAct

Subject: RE: Qahtani

Hi Mark,

We'll look into your question and will circle back to you later today.

Thanks, [redacted] (b)(3) CIAAct

From: Hosenball, Mark J. (Reuters) <[redacted] (b)(6)> (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(3) CIAAct

Sent: Monday, January 07, 2019 11:39 AM (b)(6)

To: [redacted]@ucia.gov>; [redacted]@ucia.gov>

Subject: Qahtani

Editors want me to check to see what US is hearing about MBS sidekick Qahtani, who according to what I heard at the time was deeply implicated in Khashoggi murder. But apparently not only has he faced no consequences but according to my Reuters colleagues he has actually gained power and influence.

This is the sort of thing colleagues are hearing from region:

More than two months ago, Saud al-Qahtani was fired as a top aide to Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and later sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury for his role in the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

Now Qahtani is again wielding influence in Prince Mohammed's inner circle, instructing a select group of Saudi journalists on what to write and remaining active in the digital surveillance of government critics, according to six sources including foreign diplomats and Saudis with links to the royal court.

The apparent immunity of Qahtani, seen as the crown prince's right-hand man, risks undermining Saudi promises to hold accountable those responsible for Khashoggi's murder. The U.S. Senate last month backed a resolution blaming the crown prince for the killing and insisting that Riyadh hold those responsible to account.

Thoughts/guidance most welcome. Big tks mh

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, December 04, 2018 8:07 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct [redacted] (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: (b)(6) Re: Query: Full Senate Briefing

(b)(3) CIAAct
Thanks [redacted] (b)(6) (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: '[redacted]@ucia.gov'
Date: Tuesday, December 4, 2018 at 7:33:08 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct [redacted]@ucia.gov
Subject: FW: Query: Full Senate Briefing

I spoke to Alex – no guidance nor comment from us.

From: Alexander Ward
Sent: Tuesday, December 04, 2018 7:25 PM
To: [redacted] (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: Query: Full Senate Briefing
Hi, would Director Haspel be willing to meet with all senators in a closed setting to brief on the Khashoggi/Saudi Arabia intelligence, like she did today to a handful of senators?
Thanks and best,
Alex
Alex Ward
Staff Writer, International Security
and Defense
Vox.com
[redacted] (b)(6)

Vox is part of Vox Media, home of SB Nation,
The Verge, Polygon, Recode, Eater, Curbed, and Racked

From: TASS Agency (b)(6) on behalf of TASS Agency
Sent: Friday, November 16, 2018 7:23 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6)
Subject: (b)(6) Re: Query from TASS on WaPo report on Saudi Arabia

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)
Much appreciated, (b)(6)
Have a good weekend,
Dmitry

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)
On Fri, Nov 16, 2018 at 7:15 PM (b)(6) @ucia.gov> wrote:

Hi Dmitry,

You can note CIA declined to comment.

Take care, (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

CIA Office of Public Affairs

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: TASS Agency <(b)(6)>

Sent: Friday, November 16, 2018 6:34 PM

(b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6) @ucia.gov>; (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6) @ucia.gov>; (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6) @ucia.gov>;
(b)(6) (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6) @ucia.gov>; (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6) @ucia.gov>;

Subject: Query from TASS on WaPo report on Saudi Arabia

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Dear all,

Are you saying anything regarding a WaPo report claiming that the CIA has concluded that it was the Saudi Crown Prince who ordered Mr. Khashoggi murdered?

Thanks.

Best,

Dmitry

Dmitry Kirsanov

Acting Bureau Chief

TASS

529 14th St NW Suite 1004

Washington DC 20045

(b)(6)

office

fax

--

TASS

529 14th St NW Suite 1004

Washington DC 20045

(b)(6)

office

fax

Sent: Friday, October 19, 2018 12:42 PM
To: Ackerman, Spencer
Cc: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: RE: Query from the Daily Beast re Rep. Castro accusation re Khashoggi/MBS

From: Ackerman, Spencer (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, October 19, 2018 10:25 AM
T(b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov>
Subject: FW: Query from the Daily Beast re Rep. Castro accusation re Khashoggi/MBS

Forwarding to the general CIA media address per (b)(6) OOO message.

--
Spencer Ackerman
Senior National Security Correspondent
The Daily Beast

(b)(6) mobile: Signal, WhatsApp, Telegram
office
encrypted phone

(b)(6) encrypted email

Gchat: (b)(6)

Skype:

SilentText/Phone: (b)(6)

Twitter: @attackerman

NOTE: All emails are presumed to be on the record unless and until a mutually accepted negotiation of ground rules has successfully concluded. Any unilateral declaration by recipient of this email that a conversation is on background or off the record will not be honored.

From: "Ackerman, Spencer" (b)(6)

Date: Friday, October 19, 2018 at 10:24 AM

To: (b)(6) @ucia.gov>>, "Brian P. Hale"

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(3) @dni.gov>>

(b)(6)

Subject: Query from the Daily Beast re Rep. Castro accusation re Khashoggi/MBS

Hi (b)(6) & Brian,

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6) On CNN this morning, Rep. Joaquin Castro of HPSCI made an allegation about Jared Kushner that implicated US intelligence in the Khashoggi slaying. Castro said he had seen "reporting that Jared Kushner may have, with U.S. intelligence, delivered a hit list, an enemies list, to the crown prince, to MBS, in Saudi Arabia and that the prince may have acted on that, and one of the people he took action against is Mr. Khashoggi."

For the record, did U.S. intelligence ever deliver, or aid in delivering "a hit list, an enemies list" to MBS or any other Saudi official?

Thanks,

Spencer

--

Spencer Ackerman
Senior National Security Correspondent
The Daily Beast

(b)(6) mobile: Signal, WhatsApp, Telegram

office

encrypted phone

(b)(6) encrypted email

Gchat: (b)(6)

Skype:

SilentText/Phone: (b)(6)

Twitter: @attackerman

NOTE: All emails are presumed to be on the record unless and until a mutually accepted negotiation of ground rules has successfully concluded. Any unilateral declaration by recipient of this email that a conversation is on background or off the record will not be honored.

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

From: [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2018 10:59 AM
To: Sciutto, Jim
Subject: RE: Question

Hey sorry for delay; I was in our gym (no phone). Don't have any guidance on this; sorry.

From: Sciutto, Jim
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2018 8:51 AM
To: [redacted] (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: Question (b)(6)

Has Haspell listened to the Khashoggi audio? Thanks, Jim

Jim Sciutto
Newsroom Anchor & Chief National Security Correspondent
CNN
Email: [redacted] (b)(6)
Mobile: [redacted]
Twitter: @jimsciutto

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

From: [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, November 28, 2018 4:56 PM
To: 'Mike Allen'
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: RE: Quick Note for Mike

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Hi Mike,

I see you guys are (of course) covering today's all-Senate briefing. Here's what we're saying in response to questions about that. Best, [redacted]

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Attributable to CIA Press Secretary Timothy Barrett:

"While Director Haspel did not attend today's Yemen policy briefing, the Agency has already briefed the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and Congressional leadership on the totality of the compartmented, classified intelligence and will continue to provide updates on this important matter to policymakers and Congress. The notion that anyone told Director Haspel not to attend today's briefing is false."

Best,

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6) [redacted]

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, November 27, 2018 6:00 PM
To: 'Mike Allen'
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: RE: Quick Note for Mike

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

(b)(3) CIAAct

Fantastic, Mike. Thanks! [redacted]

(b)(6)

From: Mike Allen
Sent: Tuesday, November 27, 2018 5:57 PM
To: [redacted]
Subject: Re: Quick Note for Mike

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Appreciate your reaching out — Thank you so much
Best, M, [redacted]

On Nov 27, 2018, at 5:55 PM (b)(3) CIAAct [redacted]@ucia.gov> wrote:
(b)(6)

Hi Mike,

Great meeting you last week! I saw this story on Axios, citing *The Guardian*. They got it wrong, and their online update should pop any moment. NSA Bolton this afternoon addressed it at presser in response to question (clipped from CNN immediately below). I just want to flag it for you as I don't have Marisa's contact info. Thanks so much!

From CNN covering presser:

Bolton denied reports that the White House is blocking Haspel from briefing senators. "Certainly not," Bolton said when asked about the reports.

Best,

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Central Intelligence Agency

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: [redacted]
Sent: Monday, February 11, 2019 4:29 PM
To: 'Demetri Sevastopulo (Financial Times-Washington Bureau Chief)'
Subject: RE: Re:

Hi Demetri,

I'm definitely available in March. Please reach out when you return! I think the last time we met in person was briefly at the FT fall fete in 2017. Best, [redacted]

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: Demetri Sevastopulo (Financial Times - Washington Bureau Chief)
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2019 6:58 PM
To: [redacted] (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: Re: (b)(6)

Okay, thanks [redacted] By the way, at some point, I would love to meet for coffee. While the agency is not my main beat on a daily basis, I am keep to meet more of the people heading comms across the government. Do you have time in March? I am heading to Vietnam for Trump-Kim but otherwise generally around.

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Demetri

Demetri Sevastopulo
Financial Times
Washington Bureau Chief
Mobile: [redacted] (b)(6)
Photography: [Instagram](#)

On Thu, Feb 7, 2019 at 6:57 PM (b)(3) CIAAct [redacted]@ucia.gov> wrote:
(b)(6)

Hi Demetri,

Thanks for reaching out. We don't have any guidance.

Best,

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Central Intelligence Agency
(b)(3) CIAAct

Sent from mobile

From: "Demetri Sevastopulo (Financial Times - Washington Bureau Chief)" (b)(6)
Date: Thursday, February 7, 2019 at 6:53:28 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov>, (b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov>
Cc: "Aime Williams" (b)(6)

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Does the agency have any comment on the NYT story about MBS saying he would use a "bullet" on Khashoggi?

Thanks, Demetri

Demetri Sevastopulo
Financial Times
Washington Bureau Chief
Mobile: (b)(6)
Photography: [Instagram](#)

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(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

From: [redacted]
Sent: Monday, October 22, 2018 5:46 PM
To: 'Hosenball, Mark J. (Reuters)'
Cc: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: RE: roar or meow ?

Hi Mark,

I just called you, but I missed you. Please feel free to call me back at (b)(3) CIAAct

Thank you, (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: Hosenball, Mark J. (Reuters)
Sent: Monday, October 22, 2018 5:03 PM (b)(3) CIAAct
To: [redacted] [redacted] (b)(6)
(b)(3) CIAAct or meow ?

Tiger squad ? Is this even partly real or total nonsense ? thoughts welcome. Tks etc mh

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/tiger-squad-saudi-hitmen-khashoggi-mbs>

From: Hosenball, Mark J. (Reuters) <(b)(6)> on behalf of
Hosenball, Mark J. (Reuters)
Sent: Sunday, March 17, 2019 6:27 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct <(b)(3) CIAAct> (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: (b)(6) Re: Saudi dissenters (b)(6)

Ok tks mh

Get Outlook for iOS (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: <(b)(6)>
Sent: Sunday, March 17, 2019 6:22:37 PM (b)(3) CIAAct
To: Hosenball, Mark J. (Reuters); (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Saudi dissenters

Thanks Mark

I don't anticipate guidance but welcome a chat tomorrow

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Central Intelligence Agency
(b)(3) CIAAct

Sent from mobile

From: "Hosenball, Mark J. (Reuters)" <(b)(6)> (b)(3) CIAAct
Date: Sunday, March 17, 2019 at 5:39:26 PM (b)(6)
To: <(b)(3) CIAAct@ucia.gov>, (b)(3) CIAAct <(b)(3) CIAAct@ucia.gov>, (b)(6)
(b)(3) CIAAct <(b)(3) CIAAct@ucia.gov> (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6) **Subject:** Saudi dissenters (b)(6)

Welcome comment/guidance on this one. Tks. Believe I had heard something along these lines a while ago. mh

WASHINGTON — Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia authorized a secret campaign to silence dissenters — which included the surveillance, kidnapping, detention and torture of Saudi citizens — more than a year before the killing of Jamal Khashoggi, according to American officials who have read classified intelligence reports about the campaign.

At least some of the clandestine missions were carried out by members of the same team that killed and dismembered Mr. Khashoggi in Istanbul in October, suggesting that his killing was a particularly egregious part of a wider campaign to silence Saudi dissidents, according to the officials and associates of some of the Saudi victims.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/17/world/middleeast/khashoggi-crown-prince-saudi.html>

Get Outlook for iOS

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

From: [redacted]
Sent: Monday, December 03, 2018 7:04 PM
To: Nick Schifrin
Subject: Re: Saudi update

Thanks for your email - I'll give you a call now.

From: "Nick Schifrin" [redacted] (b)(6)
Date: Monday, December 3, 2018 at 6:52:59 PM
To: [redacted]@ucia.gov>
Subject: Saudi update (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6)

Hi [redacted] (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6)
(b)(6)

How are you? Hope all is well.

Do you have some time to talk about some of the latest reporting on Saudi and Khashoggi? Thanks very much.

Best,

Nick

-

Nick Schifrin

Foreign Affairs and Defense Correspondent, PBS NewsHour

Office: [redacted] (b)(6)

Mobile/WhatsApp/Signal: [redacted] (b)(6)

[redacted] (b)(6)

@nickschifrin

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

From:

Sent:

Thursday, October 18, 2018 2:27 PM

To:

Evans, Michael; [redacted]

(b)(3) CIAAct

Subject:

RE: Saudi

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

Hi Mike,

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

Thanks for reaching out. Unfortunately, we do not have any guidance. Also please note [redacted] has departed our team!

Best,

(b)(3) CIAAct [redacted]
(b)(6)

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

(b)(3) CIAAct

From: Evans, Michael

Sent: Thursday, October 18, 2018 11:57 AM

To: [redacted]

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(3) CIAAct Saudi
(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Hi [redacted] and [redacted]

Can I ask a tricky question? Is there any way you can guide me, without any attribution, as to whether the US has already acquired through its own means the Turkish video and audio tapes of the suspected killing of Khashoggi inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul? Any guidance of any kind please.

Best

Mike

--

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From: Aime Williams (b)(6) on behalf of Aime Williams
Sent: Tuesday, December 04, 2018 12:30 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(3) CIAAct
Cc: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Senate briefing check
Attachments: ~WRD000.jpg

Okay - thanks for clarifying.

On Tue, 4 Dec 2018 at 12:27, (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6)@ucia.gov>> wrote:

Hi Aime,

There are no plans to do a media availability today.

Thanks,

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Aime Williams (b)(6)
Date: Tue, Dec 4, 2018, 11:55 AM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(3) CIAAct@ucia.gov>>
CC: (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6)@ucia.gov>>
Subject: Re: Senate briefing check (b)(3) CIAAct
Thanks (b)(6)

The Post seems to think Ms Haspel will speak in public following her briefing -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_N61yrUmBs

Is this the case?

Best wishes,

Aime (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6) (b)(6)

On Tue, 4 Dec 2018 at 09:30, (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6)@ucia.gov>> wrote:
Hi Aime. (b)(6) is out of the office today. We don't have any guidance on your question right now. I'll let you know as soon as that changes. Thanks

Regards,

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

CIA Office of Public Affairs

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

From: Aime Williams (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, December 04, 2018 9:24 AM

To: (b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov>> (b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov>> (b)(3) CIAAct

Subject: Senate briefing check (b)(6)

Hi (b)(6)

Are you able to confirm that these pars from the Post are accurate, regarding today's Senate briefing by Dir Haspel?

In addition, I was under the impression Ms Haspel had already brief the Intelligence Committee, prior to today - is that the case?

Thanks and best,

Aime

The briefing will be just for Senate leaders and the heads of national security committees seen as having an interest in Saudi policy regarding Yemen and the intelligence surrounding Khashoggi's killing, according to multiple people familiar with plans.

Bipartisan leaders from the Foreign Relations Committee, the Armed Services Committee, the Intelligence Committee and the Appropriations subcommittees that fund the State and Defense departments are expected to be included.

--

Aime Williams

Financial Times

Mob: (b)(6)

Tel: + (b)(6)

PGP: 0FC1 E9E7 5AD4 C80D FE31 0F28 C12C 34CC FD66 126C

[Image removed by sender.]

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--

Aime Williams
Financial Times

Mob: (b)(6)
Tel: +

(b)(6)

PGP: 0FC1 E9E7 5AD4 C80D FE31 0F28 C12C 34CC FD66 126C

[X]

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--

Aime Williams
Financial Times

Mob: (b)(6)
Tel: +

(b)(6)

PGP: 0FC1 E9E7 5AD4 C80D FE31 0F28 C12C 34CC FD66 126C

[X]

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From: Greg Myre <(b)(6)> on behalf of Greg Myre
Sent: Monday, November 12, 2018 2:30 PM (b)(3) CIAAct
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Turkey's tapes on Khashoggi (b)(6)

Thanks for getting back to me, (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Greg Myre
NPR National Security Correspondent

(b)(6) mobile)
(b)(6) office)

Twitter: [@gregmyre1](#)
Tips: [NPR.org/SecureDrop](#)

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, November 12, 2018 1:23 PM
To: Greg Myre ; (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: Re: Turkey's tapes on Khashoggi

Hi Greg,

Thanks for reaching out. We don't have anything to contribute.

Best,

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: "Greg Myre" <(b)(6)>
Date: Monday, November 12, 2018 at 1:12:05 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: Turkey's tapes on Khashoggi

Hi,

I wanted to see if you have any guidance or comment on Turkey's President Erdogan saying he's shared audio tapes of Khashoggi with the U.S. and others. Canada's Prime Minister Trudeau is confirming that Canadian officials have heard them:

https://www.npr.org/2018/11/12/666945209/canada-has-heard-recordings-of-khashoggis-death-trudeau-confirms?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter

Many thanks,

Greg

Greg Myre

 National Security Correspondent

(b)(6) mobile)
office)

Twitter: [@gregmyre1](https://twitter.com/gregmyre1)

Tips: [NPR.org/SecureDrop](https://www.npr.org/SecureDrop)

From: (b)(3)
Sent: Thursday, October 18, 2018 6:44 AM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(3); Amanda J Schoch
Cc: (b)(6) (b)(3)
Subject: Re: U.S. Spy Agencies Are Increasingly Convinced of Saudi Prince's Ties to Journalist's Death

Thank you (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Julian called us about this yesterday too but we didn't comment on the matter and separately, CNN (Zach Cohen) also reached out to me after the story published so heads up. Not the kind of stuff I wanna be reading. Thanks again!

Best,
Kellie

Kellie Wade
Media Spokeswoman
Office of the Director of National Intelligence

(b)(3) (o) (b)(3) (m)

----- (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: (b)(3) @ucia.gov>
Date: Wednesday, October 17, 2018 at 10:01:57 PM
To: "Amanda J Schoch" (b)(3) @dni.gov>, (b)(3) @dni.gov>
Subject: Fwd: U.S. Spy Agencies Are Increasingly Convinced of Saudi Prince's Ties to Journalist's Death

>
> Pls read bottom up for awareness

> (b)(3) CIAAct
> (b)(6)

> (b)(3) CIAAct
> (b)(6)
> (b)(3) CIAAct
> (b)(6)

> From: (b)(3) @ucia.gov>
> Date: Wednesday, October 17, 2018 at 9:53:06 PM
> To: (b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov>, (b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov>, (b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov>, (b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov>, (b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov>, (b)(6)

(b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov>, (b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov> (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(6)
(b)(6)

> Subject: Re: U.S. Spy Agencies Are Increasingly Convinced of Saudi Prince's Ties to Journalist's Death
>
> I've declined comment to two CNN correspondents chasing NYT story. Nonetheless, I expect they soon will follow NYT storyline.

> (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

>
>
>
> From: (b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov>
> Date: Wednesday, October 17, 2018 at 9:11:02 PM
> To: (b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov, (b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov, (b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov>
> Subject: (b)(6) Fwd: U.S. Spy Agencies Are Increasingly Convinced of Saudi Prince's Ties to Journalist's Death

> (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

>
>
>
> From: (b)(3) CIAAct
> Date: Wednesday, October 17, 2018 at 9:08:42 PM
> To: (b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov>
> Subject: (b)(6)YT: U.S. Spy Agencies Are Increasingly Convinced of Saudi Prince's Ties to Journalist's Death

> U.S. Spy Agencies Are Increasingly Convinced of Saudi Prince's Ties to Journalist's Death

> By Julian E. Barnes, Matthew Rosenberg and Gardiner Harris

> WASHINGTON — American intelligence officials are increasingly convinced that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia is culpable in the killing of the dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi, an appraisal that poses challenges to a White House intent on maintaining a close relationship with the kingdom.

> Intelligence agencies have not yet been able to collect direct evidence of the prince's involvement, American and European officials said. They also have not been able to conclude whether Prince Mohammed directly ordered the killing of Mr. Khashoggi, or whether his intention was to have Mr. Khashoggi captured and taken back to Saudi Arabia, according to one official.

> But intelligence agencies have growing circumstantial evidence of the prince's involvement — including the presence of members of his security detail and intercepts of Saudi officials discussing a possible plan to detain

Mr. Khashoggi, according to American officials.

- >
- > Officials have also said the prince's complete control over the security services makes it highly unlikely that an operation would have been undertaken without his knowledge.
- >
- > American intelligence agencies are preparing the assessment of Prince Mohammed to present to President Trump. The work was described by a half-dozen officials on Wednesday, as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo concluded a trip to the kingdom that failed to deliver an immediate diplomatic resolution to the crisis.
- >
- > Officials said the intelligence agencies are trying to take care not to limit the White House's policy options, and just put forward facts about the case.
- >
- > Intelligence reports are only one factor that a White House must consider in concluding matters of national security. Mr. Trump could ignore the classified assessment as he decides what policies he believes are in the American interest, or decide he is unpersuaded by the intelligence.
- >
- > Mr. Trump has pushed an explanation that a so-called rogue killer could be responsible for the killing, but the intelligence agencies' assessments could undermine that theory, which in any case has been widely discredited.
- >
- > Mr. Pompeo's trip to the kingdom was supposed to forge the beginnings of a diplomatic resolution. But current and former officials conceded that diplomatically the visit had been a disaster.
- >
- >
- >
- > Mr. Pompeo's private meeting on Tuesday with Prince Mohammed, attended by a small number of aides on both sides, was highly scripted, and he made no dramatic threats or ultimatums, said one former senior administration official who was briefed on the gathering.
- >
- > Mr. Pompeo asked for an accounting of what happened and the prince, denying any involvement in Mr. Khashoggi's disappearance, said an investigation was underway, the official said. In the end, the official said, Mr. Pompeo's plea to the Saudis was to complete the investigation quickly and transparently.
- >
- > At the State Department's headquarters in Washington, some diplomats were dismissive when asked about Mr. Pompeo's mission to Riyadh, the Saudi capital.
- >
- > But a person familiar with the meeting said that privately, Mr. Pompeo sternly told the prince that even if he did not know that Mr. Khashoggi had been killed, he would have to take responsibility to help the kingdom avoid the consequences of an international backlash.
- >
- > Mr. Khashoggi, a Saudi who lived in Virginia and wrote for The Washington Post, entered the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul on Oct. 2 to gather legal documents ahead of his planned wedding. He has not been seen since, and Turkish security officials have privately said they believe Mr. Khashoggi was killed and dismembered by Saudi agents — an explanation purportedly backed up by a gruesome audio recording of his death.
- >
- > A State Department spokeswoman said on Wednesday that Mr. Pompeo had not heard the tape. Top Saudi officials, including Prince Mohammed and King Salman, have repeatedly denied any role in Mr. Khashoggi's disappearance.
- >
- >
- >

> Publicly, Mr. Pompeo declined to discuss the case as he left Riyadh on Wednesday.

> “I don’t want to talk about any of the facts,” Mr. Pompeo said dismissively. “They didn’t want to either.

>

>

>

> His response set off an immediate maelstrom of criticism.

>

> “The fact that Saudis ‘didn’t want to’ talk about the facts is to be expected,” said Samantha Power, who served in the Obama administration. “The fact that the representative of the United States didn’t want to talk about the facts is a travesty.”

>

> Hours later, on his way back to the United States, Mr. Pompeo addressed the criticism that he had failed to hold the Saudis to account. He said he wanted “to give them the space to complete their investigations of this incident.”

>

> “It’s reasonable to give them a handful of days more to complete it so they get it right, so that it’s thorough and complete,” Mr. Pompeo said after a brief stop in Ankara, the Turkish capital.

>

> “That’s what they’ve indicated they need,” he said, “and then we’ll get to see it. We’ll evaluate this on a factual, straight-up basis.”

>

> He said the relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia was important for strategic and financial reasons.

>

> “I do think it’s important that everyone keep in their mind that we have lots of important relationships — financial relationships between U.S. and Saudi companies, governmental relationships, things we work on together all across the world,” Mr. Pompeo said.

>

> Mr. Pompeo spent just over a day in Riyadh, where news footage showed him nodding and smiling as Prince Mohammed spoke. It was a very different image than that of a cut-to-the-chase congressman who had blisteringly questioned Hillary Clinton about the 2012 attack on a diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya, becoming a conservatives’ hero.

>

> “His instructions are clearly to preserve the U.S.-Saudi relationship at all costs,” said Wendy R. Sherman, a former top State Department official. “So his nonverbal cues and his remarks are intended to do that.”

>

> But, she said, “he could have taken off the grin, dispensed with small talk, said facts were important and the U.S. was committed to get them and ended in a better place.”

>

> At the White House, Mr. Trump said he would “have a long talk” with Mr. Pompeo about what he learned in Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

>

> “He spent a lot of time with the crown prince, and he’s going to have a full report,” Mr. Trump said.

>

> Mr. Trump said that Saudi Arabia “has been a very important ally,” and also noted the kingdom was spending billions of dollars on American weapons. “When I went there, they committed to purchase \$450 billion worth of things, and \$110 billion worth of military,” the president said, claiming the orders were the biggest in the history of the world.

>

> But the mounting evidence of Saudi perfidy has confronted the Trump administration with a grave foreign policy crisis. Saudi Arabia is a crucial partner in the administration’s efforts to isolate Iran and maintain security

for Israel — all while keeping gas prices low.

>

>

> R. Nicholas Burns, the third-ranking official at the State Department in the George W. Bush administration, described Mr. Pompeo as “a serious and tough-minded person,” who was right to travel to Saudi Arabia, given the crisis — and that the public did not know what Mr. Pompeo said in private.

>

> “But we have more important interests at stake,” Mr. Burns said.

>

> “We can’t afford to have a business-as-usual attitude. This is a time to be stern with M.B.S., to disavow his government’s crime and to sanction Saudi Arabia. Our credibility as a democracy is at stake,” he added, using an abbreviation for the prince.

>

> Eric Schmitt, Edward Wong, Maggie Haberman and Jonathan Martin contributed reporting.

>

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> --

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

> Quaecumque Sunt Vera

>

From: Cohen, Zachary (b)(6) on behalf of Cohen, Zachary
Sent: Tuesday, November 27, 2018 4:36 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: (b)(6) Re: Ukraine quote

Hey just wanted to circle back on this Thanks

Zachary Cohen (b)(3) CIAAct
Reporter, National Security (b)(6)
(b)(6) (desk)
(b)(6) (cell)
@ZcohenCNN



From: "Cohen, Zachary"
Date: Tuesday, November 27, 2018 at 2:38 PM (b)(3) CIAAct
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Ukraine quote

10-4 will do thanks ... and just to follow up, if the WH is not blocking does that mean the director is open to attending the briefing if asked by lawmakers?

Zachary Cohen
Reporter, National Security
(b)(6) (desk)
(b)(6) (cell)
@ZcohenCNN



(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
Date: Tuesday, November 27, 2018 at 2:38 PM
To: "Cohen, Zachary"
Subject: RE: Ukraine quote

Actually NSA Bolton addressed it head-on. He said WH was not blocking. Pls pull that. I'll see what's possible re: Ukraine.

From: Cohen, Zachary
Sent: Tuesday, November 27, 2018 2:36 PM

To: [redacted]
Subject: Ukraine quote

The Ukrainian President told CNN's Christiane Amanpour that according to intelligence his government has seen, Russia has built up troops along his country's border.

"Based on our intelligence information, including those we received from our NATO sources, Russia concentrate alongside of our border the big amount of troops," Petro Poroshenko said from Kiev.

"We have all the evidence of that."

--- Last thing ... Sarah Sanders referred questions regarding reports that the WH is preventing Director Haspel from briefing Senate lawmakers on Khashoggi to you guys ... wondering if you have any visibility on that.

Zachary Cohen
Reporter, National Security

(b)(6) (desk)
(cell)

@ZcohenCNN



From: (b)(3) CIAAct
Sent: (b)(6) Thursday, February 21, 2019 5:11 PM
To: 'Crowell, Madeline'
Subject: RE: Urgent quick question for New York Times Story

Sure thing! We try to help whenever possible. Reach out anytime.

(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)
From: Crowell, Madeline
Sent: Thursday, February 21, 2019 5:07 PM
To: [redacted]
Subject: Re: Urgent quick question for New York Times Story

Got it - thanks!

On Thu, Feb 21, 2019 at 5:05 PM (b)(3) CIAAct [redacted]@ucia.gov> wrote:
(b)(6)

Hi Maddy—

Thanks for following up! I'm sorry that I'm unable to do so. You see, these questions surround a reportedly classified assessment. And we are unable to discuss anything related to classified assessments, even if off-record. Thank you for understanding, and I wish you the best in your pursuits!

(b)(3) CIAAct [redacted]
(b)(6)

From: Crowell, Madeline <(b)(6) [redacted]>
Sent: Thursday, February 21, 2019 4:58 PM
To: [redacted]@ucia.gov> (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: Re: Urgent quick question for New York Times Story (b)(6)

Thanks [redacted] To clarify, this was an off-the-record request. Are you able to confirm any of it on background?
(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

On Thu, Feb 21, 2019 at 4:54 PM (b)(3) CIAAct [redacted]@ucia.gov> wrote:
(b)(6)

Hi Maddy,

Thank you for contacting us. We also heard from your colleague Jamie Fisher for fact-checking on this same piece. Unfortunately, we don't have any guidance for you on what you have conveyed below.

Best,

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

Central Intelligence Agency

(b)(3) CIAAct



CENTRAL
INTELLIGENCE
AGENCY

THE WORK OF A NATION.
THE CENTER OF INTELLIGENCE.

From: Crowell, Madeline (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, February 21, 2019 4:43 PM
To: @ucia.gov (b)(3) CIAAct @ucia.gov
Subject: Urgent quick question for New York Times Story
(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(6)

Hello,

I'm a fact-checker at the New York Times Magazine, working on a piece about Pompeo. There's mention of the CIA's assessment of Khashoggi, and I wanted to confirm from someone at the Agency that we have all of the most recent details, and information, up to date.

Can you please confirm that the following is true?

1. According to the medium-to-high-confidence assessment of the C.I.A., M.B.S. ordered the killing of Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi dissident, Washington Post contributor and resident of Virginia
2. Khashoggi was lured to the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on Oct. 2 under the pretext of obtaining a marriage license, then strangled with a plastic bag and cut to pieces with a bone saw.
3. M.B.S.'s responsibility for Khashoggi's murder is the latest conclusion reached by the United States intelligence community that Trump has been unwilling to accept

If you're able to confirm this by EOD today, or early tomorrow AM, that would be much appreciated. I apologize for the tight deadline but we're closing tomorrow!

Thanks,
Maddy

--

MADDY CROWELL

New York Times Magazine

(b)(6)

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MADDY CROWELL

New York Times Magazine

(b)(6)

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MADDY CROWELL

New York Times Magazine

(b)(6)

From: Hosenball, Mark J. (Reuters) <(b)(6)> on behalf of
Hosenball, Mark J. (Reuters)
Sent: Thursday, October 18, 2018 8:33 AM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct <>
Subject: (b)(6) Who done it ?

This story seems pretty much on target to me...unless it's overstated. Thoughts welcome. Tks etc mh

U.S. Spy Agencies Are Increasingly Convinced of Saudi Prince's Ties to Journalist's Disappearance

American intelligence officials have growing circumstantial evidence of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's involvement in Jamal Khashoggi's disappearance in Istanbul.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/17/world/middleeast/pompeo-khashoggi-murder.html>

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From: Morgan Chalfant (b)(6) on behalf of Morgan Chalfant
Sent: Monday, December 03, 2018 4:34 PM

To: (b)(3) CIAAct

Subject: (b)(6) WSJ report on Khashoggi briefing -- please response promptly

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6) (b)(6)

and

I hope you're well! Sent this a few minutes ago but didn't include a subject hed, so I figured best to resend.

I'm just seeing the Wall Street Journal reporting that CIA Director Haspel is going to brief lawmakers on Tuesday on the death of Jamal Khashoggi. Is there any chance you can confirm this and possibly provide any additional background information on the topic(s), timing, and parties involved in the briefing?

If you could get back to me as soon as you can I'd appreciate it -- also feel free to call me at (b)(6) happy to speak off the record or on background.

Morgan

From: White House: Office of the Vice President (b)(6) on behalf of
White House: Office of the Vice President
Sent: Saturday, November 17, 2018 11:20 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: [EXTERNAL] VPOTUS PNG pool - final gaggle

From: Andrew BEATTY (b)(6)
Date: November 17, 2018 at 11:09:21 PM EST
Subject: [EXTERNAL] VPOTUS PNG pool - final gaggle

The VP should have departed by now, but wanted to send across fuller quotes from his gaggle at APEC Haus in Port Moresby. Great to be in contact with all of you again. As they say in PNG pidgin lukim yu bihain -- bye.

VPOTUS kicked off by speaking of a successful Asia swing and a "renewed American commitment to growing economies and security all across the indo-Pacific region"

WSJ – Is China trying to build an empire in the indo-Pacific?

"The United States is here to stay."

"There is no place in this region for Empire or aggression."

"We desire a better relationship with China and with all the nations across this region."

"He said the United States is putting a priority on the indo-Pacific"

WSJ – Exchange with Xi?

"I spoke to president Xi twice during the course of this conference. We had a candid conversation. I know he is looking forward to his meeting with President Trump at the G20, I know that President Trump is also looking forward to that meeting."

Relationship goes back far, "but there are differences today. They begin with trade practices, with tariffs and quotas, forced technology transfers, the theft of intellectual property. It goes beyond that to freedom of navigation in the seas, concerns about human rights"

Said all those issues would be topics of discussion for Xi and POTUS.

Told Xi Americans interested in a better relationship “but there has to be change.”

WSJ – How did Xi respond?

“He thought that dialogue is important”

VOA – What is your response to evidence of Chinese influence in region, evidenced in PNG?

Said honoured to be here “i understand that I'm the first vice president ever to visit.”

AFP – Is MbS a force for good?

Repeated same language as yesterday about Khashoggi “atrocities” but said he had received an “initial briefing” will review the full report.

“We're going to hold them all accountable. That being said I know that the president is going to make this decision in the context of an enormously important strategic relationship with Saudi Arabia.”

Bloomberg – Are there people in the WH you don't trust?

Repeated language about there always being change after an election. “Whatever changes will be made the president will be making those decisions”

“Couldn't be more proud to serve in this White House.”

NBC – Does DPRK need to denuke before peace treaty?

“No daylight” between ROK, Japan and US. Claimed “remarkable progress” on North Korea.

“We are absolutely committed to full, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. How we do that, the objective will not change. But we will not make the mistakes of the past.”

Wash Post – Is testing new weapon sign of a leader interested in peace?

“I saw those press reports and haven't been briefed yet.” said also saw reports of DPRK releasing an American.

POTUS “believes there is an opportunity here for peace.”

Washpost - Where is the summit going to be?

“I'll keep you posted.”

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From: White House: Office of the Vice President (b)(6) on behalf of
White House: Office of the Vice President
Sent: Saturday, November 17, 2018 2:23 AM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: [EXTERNAL] VPOTUS PNG pool 5 - gaggle

From: Andrew BEATTY (b)(6)
Date: November 17, 2018 at 1:34:11 AM EST
Subject: [EXTERNAL] VPOTUS PNG pool 5 - gaggle

VPOTUS gagged with the pool for almost 20 minutes.

Some breakouts

Regarding the CIA assessment about MbS , VP Pence said he “can’t comment on classified information.”

“The murder of Jamal Khashoggi was an atrocity. It was also an affront to a free and independent press and the United States is determined to hold all of those accountable who are responsible for that murder.”

“We are going to follow the facts”

But he also added the US wanted to find a way of preserving a “strong and historic partnership” with the KSA.

On question of his loyalty, after a lengthy pause he said “I’m just tempted not to dignified it with a comment, the president and I have a very close, we’ve got a very strong relationship, I’ve been honoured to serve as his Vice President, I was honoured when he ask me to run with him.”

Said the administration didn’t put stock in anonymous sources.

Said he spoke to POTUS and “It came up “

“We had a good laugh”

After the meeting with Taiwan rep he said he would “carry back” proposal for a Taiwan FTA

On China relationship he said “great power competition between the United States and China in this region doesn’t need to mean hostility.”

“We want to see China open up... in a way that respects our international trading system”

He said the message to the Pacific was “we’re here to stay”

Re Nick Ayers VP Pence said he has done an outstanding job ... if the President is going to make any changes he will announce them.

He noted "there is always change after elections happen."

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(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

From:

Sent:

Tuesday, November 20, 2018 12:42 PM

To:

(b)(3) CIAAct

Subject:

FW: Statement from President Donald J. Trump on Standing with Saudi Arabia

From: White House Press Office

(b)(6)

(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, November 20, 2018 12:35 PM

To: <[redacted]@whitehouse.gov>

Subject: Statement from President Donald J. Trump on Standing with Saudi Arabia

[The White House]

Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 20, 2018

Statement from President Donald J. Trump on Standing with Saudi Arabia

America First!

The world is a very dangerous place!

The country of Iran, as an example, is responsible for a bloody proxy war against Saudi Arabia in Yemen, trying to destabilize Iraq's fragile attempt at democracy, supporting the terror group Hezbollah in Lebanon, propping up dictator Bashar Assad in Syria (who has killed millions of his own citizens), and much more. Likewise, the Iranians have killed many Americans and other innocent people throughout the Middle East. Iran states openly, and with great force, "Death to America!" and "Death to Israel!" Iran is considered "the world's leading sponsor of terror."

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia would gladly withdraw from Yemen if the Iranians would agree to leave. They would immediately provide desperately needed humanitarian assistance. Additionally, Saudi Arabia has agreed to spend billions of dollars in leading the fight against Radical Islamic Terrorism.

After my heavily negotiated trip to Saudi Arabia last year, the Kingdom agreed to spend and invest \$450 billion in the United States. This is a record amount of money. It will create hundreds of thousands of jobs, tremendous economic development, and much additional wealth for the United States. Of the \$450 billion, \$110 billion will be spent on the purchase of military equipment from Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon and many other great U.S. defense contractors. If we foolishly cancel these contracts, Russia and China would be the enormous beneficiaries - and very happy to acquire all of this newfound business. It would be a wonderful gift to them directly from the United States!

The crime against Jamal Khashoggi was a terrible one, and one that our country does not condone. Indeed, we have taken strong action against those already known to have participated in the murder. After great independent research, we now know many details of this horrible crime. We have already sanctioned 17 Saudis known to have been involved in the murder of Mr. Khashoggi, and the disposal of his body.

Representatives of Saudi Arabia say that Jamal Khashoggi was an "enemy of the state" and a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, but my decision is in no way based on that - this is an unacceptable and horrible crime. King Salman and

Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman vigorously deny any knowledge of the planning or execution of the murder of Mr. Khashoggi. Our intelligence agencies continue to assess all information, but it could very well be that the Crown Prince had knowledge of this tragic event – maybe he did and maybe he didn't!

That being said, we may never know all of the facts surrounding the murder of Mr. Jamal Khashoggi. In any case, our relationship is with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. They have been a great ally in our very important fight against Iran. The United States intends to remain a steadfast partner of Saudi Arabia to ensure the interests of our country, Israel and all other partners in the region. It is our paramount goal to fully eliminate the threat of terrorism throughout the world!

I understand there are members of Congress who, for political or other reasons, would like to go in a different direction - and they are free to do so. I will consider whatever ideas are presented to me, but only if they are consistent with the absolute security and safety of America. After the United States, Saudi Arabia is the largest oil producing nation in the world. They have worked closely with us and have been very responsive to my requests to keeping oil prices at reasonable levels – so important for the world. As President of the United States I intend to ensure that, in a very dangerous world, America is pursuing its national interests and vigorously contesting countries that wish to do us harm. Very simply it is called America First!

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(b)(3) CIAAct

(b)(6)

From:

Sent:

Tuesday, November 20, 2018 6:25 PM

To:

(b)(3) CIAAct

Subject:

(b)(6)

FW: Statement from President Donald J. Trump on Standing with Saudi Arabia

From: White House Press Office

(b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, November 20, 2018 12:35 PM

To: (b)(3) CIAAct <[redacted]@ucia.gov>

Subject: Statement from President Donald J. Trump on Standing with Saudi Arabia

[The White House]

Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 20, 2018

Statement from President Donald J. Trump on Standing with Saudi Arabia

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From: White House Press Office (b)(6)
on behalf of White House Press Office
Sent: Saturday, October 20, 2018 9:05 AM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: (b)(6) Remarks by President Trump at Defense Roundtable | Luke Air Force Base, AZ

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release October 19, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
AT DEFENSE ROUNDTABLE

Luke Air Force Base
Maricopa County, Arizona

5:07 P.M. MST

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it's great talent around this beautiful room. And thank you all for being here. By the way, the head of Boeing and the head of Lockheed, and the head of Raytheon and the head of everything else, we have them all. We have them all around. So thank you all for being here. It's an honor.

I want to thank General Todd Canterbury for the tour. That's pretty lethal weaponry. I've been going around the last week or so, more so than ever -- I've been saying we make the greatest -- the greatest military equipment in the world. Not even a contest. There's nothing close. And every other country knows it. And, you know, we're talking about something right now, where a particular country ordered -- you'll never guess who this is -- about \$110 billion worth of equipment. And I assume you'd like to keep those orders probably. (Laughter.)

PARTICIPANT: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: But if you don't -- Boeing, Dennis -- you can let me know. (Laughter.) It'll make things a lot easier. But you make the best, and that's why you have it.

Also, Luke Air Force Base -- I've heard about it for so long; so good. Top of the line, isn't it? Huh? Thank you very much, General.

I also want to thank our roundtable participants today: Secretary Wilbur Ross, doing a great job. All those trade deals we're making, Wilbur. Right? Representative Martha McSally, who is a special woman. And I met her when she was in Congress, and we work together well. She's a great pilot. A lot of people told me she's really a talented pilot as opposed to one that just about made it. She made it easily. And she likes a specific plane; we won't tell them what the plane is. (Laughter.) They don't make that plane anymore.

REPRESENTATIVE MCSALLY: (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. But she's been fantastic.

Also, Representative Tom O'Halleran, thank you very much. Where's Tom? Tom? What are you doing over there, Tom? You can join us, even though you're a Democrat. (Laughter.) Representative Debbie Lesko. And, Debbie, a great job you've done. You've done a great job. We worked hard a couple years ago --

REPRESENTATIVE LESKO: We did.

THE PRESIDENT: And now your district loves you, right?

REPRESENTATIVE LESKO: I sure hope so.

THE PRESIDENT: They better.

REPRESENTATIVE LESKO: More elections in one year, I'll tell you.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, that's true. You set a record.

REPRESENTATIVE LESKO: Well, welcome to my district.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you very much. It's great to be here. Thank you.

Also, Secretary -- Deputy Secretary Patrick Shanahan. And, Patrick, thanks. Great job you -- he's a good purchaser of equipment. I hope you find that he negotiates well, because if he doesn't, I'm going to be very disappointed. What do you think, Dennis? Is he okay?

MR. MUILENBURG: He's tough.

THE PRESIDENT: Huh?

MR. MUILENBURG: He's tough. He's good.

THE PRESIDENT: I would expect you to say that. (Laughter.) Dennis is Boeing.

So thank you very much, Patrick. And it's been great working with you. And we have -- we've made some big purchases, some good deals. A little bit better than presented. And it's the best. There's nothing like the stuff.

Secretary Heather Wilson -- Heather, thank you very much. Appreciate it. Thank you. Great job you're doing. Under Secretary Ellen Lord, thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Ellen. You're keeping busy, right?

UNDER SECRETARY LORD: Absolutely.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. I think so. And all of the outstanding representatives who join us today from America's aerospace and defense industries, civil society. I mean, if you look at the civil society and the business society, it's been pretty amazing what's happened over the last two years. And you're all doing well, and we're doing well. The country is doing well. We're setting new records on jobs. We've got every category -- just about every category is a new record, or very close. And a lot of them work for you. A lot of them work for your great companies. And they are great companies. Thank you very much.

This incredible state is home to six major military installations, more than 30,000 military personnel, and thousands of defense companies. Arizona's military industry supports 76,000 jobs -- that's big -- and creates \$11.5 billion in economic output.

So what state would be comparable or larger? Is it larger? I mean, Texas does great.

REPRESENTATIVE MCSALLY: I think we're number three. I think we're number three on the list.

THE PRESIDENT: Number three? All right. But knowing you, you'll be --

REPRESENTATIVE MCSALLY: (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: She'll be number one very quickly. That's why she's doing so well. They all know.

The United States must always invest in a strong military. And it's been very important for me. The military has been vital. That's why we had, Wilbur, \$700 billion approved last year, and \$716 billion this year. And, General, everybody that passes me, from the military, thanks me for the new equipment. We were very depleted, and we're not depleted anymore. Although the equipment is pouring in, but we're not depleted anymore. So that's fantastic.

We've secured record funding for the armed forces. The funds will support new fighter jets, ships, tanks, thousands of new recruits. And we also gave something very important, and that was a pay increase -- the first in 10 years. A nice, substantial pay increase to the people that deserve it so badly.

And one of the things that was very important to me is to totally modernize and rebuild our nuclear arsenal. And we're doing that. And we will, very shortly, be in a position where there won't be anybody close -- not that we ever want to think about using it, but we're not going to use it. The best way, the only way is -- that's the way we don't have to use it, right? So we're doing a lot of work on that. And in a very short period of time -- already we're superior, but we will be at a level that nobody competes with.

Earlier this month, we released our landmark Defense Industrial Base report, which outlines new ways to strengthen our defense and manufacturing base. American-made military products are more effective, more lethal, and more precise than any other equipment in the world. And I've been going around saying that. And we have a lot of countries that are dying to order our stuff, but we don't like them that much, so we don't let them order. But overall, Marilyn, I don't think you're complaining, right? And that F-35 is special. That is a special -- that's a special fighter, right? It's great.

So we have to ensure that our warriors -- our brave, brave warriors -- have the resources that they need and deserve, and that our allies and partners continue to purchase American products. We want them to purchase our products. They're the best products.

Joining us today are several inspiring leaders who all share my commitment to supporting our military. And they're making America more prosperous, more competitive, secure and proud. And we really do. I mean, I know these people pretty well. I knew them a little bit in private industry. I know them a lot from what I've been doing for the last almost two years. Can you believe that, Dennis? It's almost two years already.

We just gave him an order for Air Force One. Air Force One now is 30 years old. And it was time. And they wanted to do it for the last two administrations; they never got it done. But we got it done.

MR. MUILENBURG: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: And hopefully you're going to speed it up. (Laughter.)

MR. MUILENBURG: Going fast.

THE PRESIDENT: And it's going to be incredible. Actually, Boeing is doing it. It's going to be a new color system: red, white, and blue. And it looks phenomenal. It's the right color system. And if it looks as good as it does in print and in the models, it's going to be fantastic. Right? So I hope you're moving along. That's moving along very fast, I hear.

MR. MUILENBURG: Yep. We're moving fast and continuing to focus on getting it delivered.

THE PRESIDENT: Very good. Very good. So I just want to thank you all for being here.

And if you have any questions, I'd like -- maybe before that, I'd like to introduce Martha McSally, say a few words. She is very special. A person that has taken the whole country by storm. They're talking about her all over the country.

I don't know -- I don't want to make you feel a little bit like, "Oh, gee, what's happening," but they're talking about you all over the country. And I fully understand that, and I got it a long time ago. I think you're going to be very, very successful.

This is a non-politician who is brilliant and brave, and became a politician, and was very successful. Her area, her district loved her. And now, as you know -- as some of you know, she's running for the Senate in Arizona. She has a very, very strange opponent. (Laughter.) I have to tell you, Martha, that should be easy, but you got to get in there fighting, right? Huh?

REPRESENTATIVE MCSALLY: (Inaudible) capacity.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. I know. Official is right. So anyway, please say a few words, Martha. We're very proud of you. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE MCSALLY: Thank you, President Trump. I really appreciate you spending the day here and taking the time to come to Luke Air Force Base. I mean, this base has a long history here in Arizona of being part of keeping our country safe. And we have such tremendous partners here around the community, in the West Valley, that are very committed to making sure that this base is protected and that our airmen are protected. And we've got the Fight Country partnership as well. They're just amazing, the partnership. We've got the same kind of partnership in southern Arizona -- the Southern Arizona Defense Alliance here.

It's just -- in Arizona, I can't -- I mean, I've been stationed in a lot of different places. But Arizona is special. And I guess everybody might say that, but I really feel that in my heart. Because so many people here have served, so many people came here to serve, or even came here to work at one of these companies. And then they choose to say, like, this is where I want to be, this is where I want to stay, this is where I want to retire.

But there is this partnership amongst the communities to support our troops and our bases and our defense industry that is really unmatched around the country. And I think everybody nodding here will tell you, it's really special. And I think it sets the example for the rest of the country. And that's everyone from -- again, I'm thinking about it; you know, I've shot some of their air missiles and used their rescue equipment. (Laughter.) We could go around the room. I mean, in the defense industry -- I don't want to leave anybody out -- but they are patriots wearing civilian clothes as well. And many of these industries have chosen to locate here.

Also, Arizona is a great state, right? It's a great state to live. It's a great state to relocate your family. So all that comes with that has just been so critical for us here in Arizona. And these representations, these leaders who have people who are coming with their families to be a part of the team, which is -- they're partnering us to equip the warfighter, to make sure that we keep our country safe.

So it's not just our military who's doing that. It's the engineers every day that are finding new capabilities for us, that are working at each of these industries. You know, I just visited yesterday -- just the idea of, like, "We're going to break through on some these things, and we're going to provide better capabilities to be able to go rescue downed airmen." And the commitment that they have is extraordinary. And that's at every company here.

And these organizations -- Yuma 50, (inaudible) -- I mean, they're doing everything from helping our deployed airmen's families -- or all the services, when they're deployed -- you know, get their oil changed; you know, help with daycare. I mean, you name it. The things that they do to step in, where the military has some legal limitations, and the civilian community, civic society steps in, it's really extraordinary.

So I just want to leave it at that. I'm so grateful for allowing me to be here. And thank you for coming to see this.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it's a great state. We love Arizona. General, could you maybe talk about Luke a little bit? Because it's got a big reputation.

GENERAL CANTERBURY: Yes, sir. It is an honor and privilege to lead the more than 5,600 men and women of Luke Air Force Base. Our mission is simple: We train the world's greatest fighter pilots here. Luke Air Force Base is responsible for training about 95 percent of the United States' Air Force fighter pilots between the 944th Wing and our 56th Fighter Wing. And it is an honor to use the equipment that these men and women provide to us, and the taxpayers provide to us to use this equipment. And we're not going to fail, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: And your father was the boss here too, right? (Laughter.)

GENERAL CANTERBURY: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: He showed me a picture. They looked like twins. He showed me a picture. And he's still around, he's still healthy, and he's still telling you what to do, right?

GENERAL CANTERBURY: Yes, sir. (Laughter.) Every night (inaudible) debrief, and he's anxiously awaiting a phone call at night, sir. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. You give him my regards.

GENERAL CANTERBURY: Thank you, sir. Will do.

Marillyn, maybe you could tell us a little about what's going on with Lockheed Martin.

MR. HEWSON: Well, Mr. President, thank you for the opportunity to participate in this important conversation, especially right here at Luke, where this is the largest F-35 base in the world, and growing. We have -- you know, with the aircraft that are coming in here, you highlighted how important the capability is for our nation. And it is the best capability.

But the study that you referenced, I just want to thank you for commissioning that. I think it's very important, because American aerospace and defense is a major part of the economic strength of this country. And when we look at 2.4 million jobs in aerospace and defense, and a trade surplus of \$86 billion, we know it's important that your study that you commissioned uncovered that we do have fragility in the supply chain, we do have capabilities that we need to bolster.

And so we're very pleased to be working with your administration, with the Department of Defense, on those recommendations that came out of that. So thank you for the opportunity to be here.

THE PRESIDENT: So, on the F-35, has the stealth gotten even better? Because it was always considered extraordinary. Has it really been upped, or is it at that same level, would you say?

MS. HEWSON: Well, I would say, sir, that we're at the point where we delivered over 300 aircraft, and the aircraft were out of the initial design phase, and this is (inaudible) design phase. Now, we'll do upgrades to the aircraft, whether it's software and other things over time that the U.S. government will commission industry to do.

So we'll keep it ahead of the threat. That's the goal. And (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: And it is ahead. It's a great plane. Thank you very much.

Dennis, from Boeing?

MR. MUILENBURG: Well, thank you, Mr. President, for being here as well. And I think as you saw earlier, you saw one of our Apache helicopters here as well.

THE PRESIDENT: That's true. Wow.

MR. MUILENBURG: Another great product produced here in the state of Arizona.

THE PRESIDENT: That's something.

MR. MUILENBURG: We had chance to go down and see our team in Mesa earlier today, and really proud to support our servicemen and women. And training for the future, as well, with the new T-X trainer that will be coming online -- we're looking forward to supporting our U.S. Air Force customer there, as well.

And I want to thank you again for the emphasis on the strength of the industrial base here. And you referenced the report, as did Marillyn. And investing in aerospace and defense is a great thing for the country -- economically; from a national security standpoint. And in particular, some of your policies around tax reform and regulatory reform is sustaining the gains there. Really important. That's allowing us to invest and innovate in defense.

I think we have challenges in the workforce side and our supply chain strength for the future -- areas where we're going to continue to work.

THE PRESIDENT: Now you can solve those challenges.

MR. MUILENBURG: You got it. And I think the work we're doing together on workforce development and training is very effective there.

We've got teammates here from our supply chain. Marti McCurdy here -- who runs Spirit Electronics, one of our small businesses in our supply chain here in Arizona -- is a great example of investing in that supply chain.

So we want to thank you for those policies.

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't know you made the missiles to the extent. I'm looking outside, and I was very surprised, actually. Boeing -- a lot of them had the name Boeing on them. I didn't know that was a great specialty of yours. Tell us about that.

MR. MUILENBURG: Yeah, that's a big area of investment for us as well. So things like the JDAM, which is used significantly around the world. Very effective for our servicemen and women. Small Diameter Bomb is another example. So you saw some of those today.

So again, we're honored to do that on behalf of our U.S. men and women in uniform. We take that job very seriously. And it was mentioned earlier -- the importance of our veterans and investing in our veterans. So thank you for what you're doing there. Veterans in the workforce, as well, is a big deal to all of us.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dennis. You're doing a great job.

MR. MUILENBURG: So you have some great talent there.

THE PRESIDENT: Some incredible things you're coming up with. Thank you very much.

Would anybody like to say anything while we're all gathered together? Anybody have any complaints or any suggestions? (Laughter.) Would anybody -- come up with any great ideas?

REPRESENTATIVE LESKO: Mr. President, I would love to say thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, Debbie.

REPRESENTATIVE LESKO: I would love to say thank you. It's so refreshing to have a President that is so strong in supporting the military and the veterans. And we appreciate it. The American public appreciates it. I mean, that's the number-one mission of government, is to protect its people. And you're doing it. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Debbie. That's really nice. Appreciate it. Anybody? Yes, sir.

MR. BRADY: Mr. President, you know, we do your encryption equipment in the White House.

THE PRESIDENT: Right. That's right.

MR. BRADY: Voice and data. But like I was saying to Secretary Ross -- you know, we have -- we can only keep a lead so long if all of our stuff is getting stolen the moment we design it. And the cyber threat is not being properly addressed. And there's capabilities, even in the products you have --

THE PRESIDENT: So what would you do about that, Chris? You're right. And they should have been doing this for 15 years, and they haven't been.

MR. BRADY: Yep.

THE PRESIDENT: So what would you do? Your company is a great company. What would you do about it?

MR. BRADY: Well, so we already ship network encryptors. We've embedded capability in those encryptors to pick up the signatures of threats and attacks, even the classified signatures, and store them safely. But we're not turning them on. It's not being used.

THE PRESIDENT: So why don't we get somebody that you would recommend, and let's bring them into government, and let's do it the right way. Because you know, it's such a specific kind of a thing. It's great knowledge involved. You can't just hire somebody off the street and say, "Hey, congratulations, you're in charge of cyber."

MR. BRADY: But the NSA has the capability to understand that. And we have --

THE PRESIDENT: They have some really good people.

MR. BRADY: And we have industry partners, like Viasat and others, that do products that can do things like that. Together we can get that stuff turned on.

When you put this -- when you turn it on, it lights up like a Christmas tree. The threats are coming every day. I mean, it's probably more than your normal traffic. And we're getting compromised every day.

THE PRESIDENT: So do we have the equipment? We definitely have the knowledge. Where are we on the scale of knowledge right now, would you say?

MR. BRADY: We're very good at tracking the threats, but we're also very stingy about disseminating the information we already know about the threats.

THE PRESIDENT: Right. Right.

MR. BRADY: That's what the fear is in the intelligence community, is to let some of that information live in these boxes that we believe are secure. But that's the only way we can defend all of our installations against these kinds of attacks.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'd like to talk to you about it.

MR. BRADY: I would love to.

THE PRESIDENT: Because I agree with you, it's very important. And there's great knowledge that you have from your company, but there's -- and others here have that great knowledge. Very important -- cyber. And I hear more and more about cyber. And we have the brainpower. We have potentially -- I mean, there's nobody that should be able to event compete with us, with what we have just around this table.

So, Jerry, any of you, if you have any ideas, let us know. We'll do something. Because we're going to do something. We've already started. But I'd rather start it from this table than any other table in the world. Does that make sense? You understand that? We have the brainpower right around this table.

So, good. Thank you, Chris. That's fantastic.

Would you like to say something?

SECRETARY WILSON: Well, sir, I'd leave it to the community leaders here (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: You're doing a great job though. I think everyone said it.

SECRETARY WILSON: Our job is to keep the country keep safe, sir. And the F-35 is part of that. We like winning. And the F-35 wins.

THE PRESIDENT: It's a great plane. Great plane. So when is Boeing going to make one to compete with it? (Inaudible.) (Laughter.)

SECRETARY WILSON: They just gave us the T-X.

THE PRESIDENT: You know what, though? You do have -- you do have that.

MR. MUILENBURG: We're in the fighter business, as well.

THE PRESIDENT: And you do have some good --

MR. MUILENBURG: We do a lot of work together.

THE PRESIDENT: And you do have some good stuff, I have to tell you. Some really good stuff. But you are going to one of the super stealths right?

MR. MUILENBURG: Yeah, we're working all together on future technologies and what will happen next, and next-generation capabilities.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. Next generation.

MR. MUILENBURG: Because I think it's important that we continue as a country to invest in that innovation.

THE PRESIDENT: I agree.

MR. MUILENBURG: Next-step capabilities. We're doing that jointly with our customers.

THE PRESIDENT: Wilbur, do you have anything? Yes.

MS. HEWSON: Can I just say that, you know, you make a very important point about how national security also drives economic security. And on the F-35, today it supports 194,000 jobs across the United States and 1,500 U.S. suppliers.

So not only does it have the high capability that we need to keep our citizens safe and to work with our allies to make sure that we have protect and -- safe and secure environment for our people, but it also brings a lot of jobs. And even here at Luke, I think we have over 400 industry professionals, and that's growing to 700 in the next several years that are supporting F-35 on the base here. That's just a microcosm of all the jobs across the country.

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

MR. DEMURO: I would just add that another example. Even in combat vehicles, where the Army is recapitalizing its ground forces, the investments that are being made in the next generation as well as the modernization.

THE PRESIDENT: And you like what we're doing?

MR. DEMURO: Absolutely.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you agree with it?

MR. DEMURO: Eighteen-thousand jobs -- Pennsylvania, Michigan, Alabama, Oklahoma, all around the country, as you go through the supply chain. So it's a model that's being repeated over and over again.

THE PRESIDENT: And you think we're doing the right thing?

MR. DEMURO: Absolutely. Securing the interest of the United States? Absolutely.

THE PRESIDENT: That's very good, thank you.

MS. SMITH: Mr. President, I'm Amber Smith, the President and CEO of the Tucson Metro Chamber. But more importantly, I am one of the founding members and the current president of the Southern Arizona Defense Alliance.

And to the Congresswoman's point, we do exceptionally well at supporting our military. In fact, in southern Arizona, we even have the statistics that -- what was it -- 93 percent of our citizens support the six installations in southern Arizona.

But what's really exceptional are the public-private partnerships. And you see that around this table. And I want to thank you for the leadership you have shown in recognizing some really incredible workforce development programs in which we are placing veterans into jobs in the aerospace and defense industry.

And I was talking to Secretary Ross about the backend technology of this, which you've recognized that, civilianizing those HR codes of military, we'll be able to better place the billions of dollars of exceptional talent we have in our military into these jobs to help immediately address some of these workforce issues, and then be able to build our pipeline as well.

So thank you very much for recognizing that that exists, and supporting our pilot program in Tucson.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you, Amber. That's very nice. Thank you.

Wilbur?

SECRETARY ROSS: We're going to help publicize the event, the product that's coming out of her workforce.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. That's great.

SECRETARY ROSS: It's a very interesting idea.

We also got some very good suggestions, before you came here, about space. So there are a couple of recommendations I'm going to carry forward to Vice President Pence, for the Space Council --

THE PRESIDENT: So we're doing a new force. You know that right?

How does the Air Force feel about that? But we're doing a brand new force. And it'll be the Space Force. And everybody is excited. Whenever I mention it, everybody goes crazy and they like it. And that's what it's all about, I guess.

You know, those planes are all beautiful. But we're now going into space. And that's for defense. I mean, we're not just talking about sending rockets up to the moon. We're talking about for defense and for offense.

So I think, pretty soon, it's been well received even in Congress, bipartisan. And pretty soon we're going to have Space Force, so that'll be number six. And this way it can be specific. We'll have a great genius like yourself, comparable, maybe not as good, but pretty good. (Laughter.) And it'll have an extra person sitting on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and it's going to be full force. It's going to be very important. I think it's going to be a big contribution. Something very necessary.

Go ahead, Wilbur.

SECRETARY ROSS: So we had interchange about supply chain management, about all kinds of issues. And we especially addressed the problems of foreign procurement and the things that Congress can do to help them solve this problem.

So I thought it was a very, very worthwhile roundtable. I don't know how the rest of you felt, but it had very good interchange. And concrete suggestions will come from it.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, what do you think?

DEPUTY SECRETARY SHANAHAN: Sure. I think a lot of things. (Laughter.) You know, I'm just going to start with, I think, where Representative Lesko was.

Thank you. You've made us stronger. Under your leadership, we are stronger. And with Congress's support, we've got a budget that makes us stronger. When you look at where we've come in terms of readiness, we now have the munitions that we lacked before. Ships are sailing, airplanes are flying. And the most important piece is we're training more.

Something that probably most people here would also echo is your advocacy on foreign military sales is huge. That has not --

THE PRESIDENT: It's hurting me right now.

DEPUTY SECRETARY SHANAHAN: I know, but --

THE PRESIDENT: Right now, it's hurting me with these people.

DEPUTY SECRETARY SHANAHAN: I know. But your advocacy is significant for this industrial base. And I think the most important aspect is the budget will allow us to modernize so that we can compete. The modernization is the single most important work that we have to get to undertake. And we're undertaking it.

And you know, as you've counseled me, we need to be good stewards, buy smart, not over specifying. I think we'll do that. But thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: And when you say "compete," I would like to say so that nobody can even come to close to competing with us, as opposed to just competing. Because what I'm really doing is putting us in a position where there's not going to be anybody even close.

And that's why we're -- again, we're looking at all of the planes, all of the weapons, all of the rockets, all of the -- everything, including, obviously, the nuclear. You hate to even bring up the nuclear because it's a -- it's such an incredible threat. But we have no choice but to do it because others do it. It would be nice if nobody would do it. Right, Dennis? It would be great. But doesn't seem to be that way.

So I just want to thank everybody at the table. Would any of you folks have a question for anybody at the table? We have the greatest talent in the world at this table. Anybody have any questions?

Q Can we ask you one question about the Saudis, sir? There's been a reaction -- there's been a statement from Saudi Arabia. (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. I just saw it. Just came out.

Q What was your reaction to that? Do you consider (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think it's a good first step. It's a big step. It's a lot of people. A lot of people involved. And I think it's a great first step.

You probably know that very fair person, Reuters -- and you probably know that -- you are; you're very good. Very, very good.

We have a tremendous order. Probably the people around this table have the vast percentage of the \$110-billion order from Saudi. We have \$450 billion. But on defense, we have \$110 billion. And I would say, almost 100 percent of it would be sitting right around this table with the great companies. Raytheon is here, too. Just great companies.

It's very important. I don't want to tell them -- I don't want to look over and tell Marilyn or Dennis, "By the way, we're going to take \$25 billion worth of sales away from you," because that would mean a lot of jobs, it would mean a lot of everything.

And Saudi Arabia has been a great ally. But what happened is unacceptable. We are going to see. They've arrested -- just for the people at the table -- a large number of people having to do with the event that took place in Turkey and the consulate -- the Saudi consulate. And it's a big first step. It's only a first step, but it's a big first step.

Q Do you consider it credible, their explanation, for --

THE PRESIDENT: I do. I do. I mean, it's -- again, it's early. We haven't finished our review or investigation. But it's -- I think it's a very important first step, and it happened sooner than people thought it would happen.

Q Did you know, sir, that it was a fistfight? And as result of the fistfight, Mr. Khashoggi was killed. (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't know that that was -- I don't know that that's -- I mean, that's a theory that's being thrown out. I don't think anybody said that. But they're saying there was a fight. But that's a theory that was put out. But they're going to be giving us a full report. But they have arrested a large number of people, and a good first step.

Yeah?

Q Sir, are you concerned that they -- the leadership there lied to you, or other members of the administration, when they denied --

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't think so at all. Because they weren't out front with me in terms of, you know, what happened. This is really a -- we just got this report from them. And you got it, along with a lot of other people. No. I think that we'll be talking to them. We'll see what happens. We may have some questions. We do have some questions.

And as I told you, I'll be working on this with Congress. Congress is very interested in this one, and we'll be working with Congress. But I would prefer, if there is going to be some form of sanctions, or what we may determine to do, if anything -- because this was a lot of people they're talking about, and people pretty high up. But I would prefer that we don't use, as retribution, cancelling \$110 billion worth of work, which means 600,000 jobs.

I know it sounds easy and it sounds good, and a lot people have said, "Oh, let's just not sell them a \$110-billion order." I guess you take it a step further, "Let's not sell them \$450 billion," which is the largest order in the history of our country. I went there to get that order. Saudi Arabia was my first stop. And everyone thought that was unusual. But I said, I want to order -- "I want you to order a tremendous amount of stuff." Right? Everything. Your stuff and everybody's stuff. And Wilbur was there. They ordered \$450 billion. There's never been anything like it, or close.

The last thing I want to do is say we're not going to supply you with that, and therefore we're going to cut -- I guess, if you add the whole thing up, because just for the military was 600,000 jobs. So now if you're talking about -- that was \$110 billion -- you know, you're talking about over a million jobs. You know, I'd rather keep the million jobs, and I'd rather find another solution.

But this was a good first step today. Okay?

Anything? Yeah.

Q Mr. President, Lindsay Graham said he's very skeptical of the Saudi narrative. Are you -- do you share some of that skepticism, too? And do you intend to speak with the Crown Prince or the King in the next day or two to get their side of the story?

THE PRESIDENT: I will -- yeah. Before I start making those statements, I'm going to speak to the Crown Prince. And I've spoken to the King. I want to speak with the Crown Prince.

And, you know, I think we're getting close to solving a very big problem. And again, remembering the people around this table know it better than anyone -- Martha McSally knows it better than anyone -- they've been a great ally in the Middle East. We need them as a counter-balance to Iran. And so it's not the simplest solution. It's not the simplest situation to be in.

But I think we're doing very well, and I think we've come a long way in a short period of time. And it'll get solved. It'll get solved. Okay?

Yeah, please.

Q Sir, do you trust the Saudis to carry out an impartial investigation given that the Crown Prince is kind of in charge of it? Or do you think a third party should be involved?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we have third parties involved. We're involved. You know, we're involved. Turkey is involved. And I wouldn't say they're exactly friends. I would think that Turkey and Saudi Arabia -- they're not too friendly. And Turkey is involved, and others are involved, frankly.

I mean, it's -- people are not happy about what happened. But this is a very big turnover when you look at the number of people that they say were involved. That was a very big -- that was a very important thing that they did. And they did it soon. They did it -- you know, we thought it was going to be the end of next week. They did it soon, which I think is very smart.

But, no, I would have to say they have been our ally. We've had great relationships with them. This is a horrible event. It has not gone unnoticed. Okay?

Q Mr. President, can you speak to the family separations policy, where you're at on that? Arizona has been one of the places where this has been going on.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we have -- Mexico has really stepped up to the plate, which is very nice. I've said to them, "Look, you know..." We've been very nice to Mexico. We have the worst immigration laws in the history of the world. They're incompetent. And, in fact, we have a great Democrat here; maybe we could negotiate some immigration laws while you're here?

REPRESENTATIVE O'HALLERAN: I'd love to negotiate that. (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: You, I would like to do it with, because you know what you are doing.

REPRESENTATIVE O'HALLERAN: Comprehensive --

THE PRESIDENT: That's -- we have just a horrible situation with the laws. The laws don't allow us to do anything. And then we have the judges that are, let's say, that are giving us decisions that are horrendous. And, hopefully, they'll be overturned in the Supreme Court, or sooner.

But I don't know if you know what's happening. And probably a lot of the people at the table don't know what's happening because this just happened. But people are coming over from Honduras; they have like 5,000 people.

Honduras and Guatemala, El Salvador. And some of these people are hard criminals. Hardened criminals. Not good people. And they broke through in Guatemala. I said, "Look, we give you hundreds of millions of dollars, Guatemala. And you're going to stop those people from coming."

And they tried, and they broke right through, and they broke through the fences. And Mexico is now really fighting. A very tough situation. Mexican soldiers have been hurt -- badly hurt, in a couple of cases. But I very much respect the fact that Mexico is willing to do this.

But these are some bad people coming through. These aren't babies. These aren't little angels coming into our country, and going to -- you know, go to work for Boeing, and go to work for Raytheon, and for Lockheed, and do a great job. These are some hardened criminals coming in. And we're not letting them in. We've got enough things right now. We're just not letting it happen.

So, Mexico, on their southern border, is fighting them right now. Literally, fighting them. And these people are fighting, and they put all the women and children up front to show you how brave they are. They put all the women and children up front. And it's a terrible situation.

And if we had laws, I could sit down, and you give me a group from the Democrats -- I could sit down and in one hour, we would solve catch and release, by getting rid of it. You know what catch and release is, Dennis? They walk over; if they put one foot on our land, we catch them. We then take the information, because we have -- it's impossible to bring them to a court. We have to bring them to a court. So we bring them to a court, but the court is never there because you don't have enough judges. There aren't enough judges in the world. If you've got every judge in the world, you don't have enough judges. So you catch them and you release them. And they go into our society, because you're not allowed to release them back into theirs. And that's one of the better ones, okay? It's just a horrible situation.

We have the visa lottery, where we take people by lottery from countries. Now, just -- you know, from a business standpoint, do you think they're giving us their finest? We get some real beauties out of the lottery. These countries -- I mean, they're not stupid. They give us people that they don't want. And we have to take them.

So I could sit down with Democrats and work this thing out in one hour. And we need a wall. We have to have a wall. We're building a wall now, but we should build it very fast. We should built it -- frankly, we should build it even higher, because these people -- incredible. They can scale them; they can do things you wouldn't believe.

But we have a wall, it's going up. But we should be able to build that in one year. And we could do it in one year. So we'll see what happens. I think this is going to be a real wake-up call for the Democrats and for the public. And for the public. People are very angry about it. Very, very angry. Okay.

Any other questions? Yeah.

Q Mr. President, what evidence do you have that these are hardened criminals trying to come into the United States?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, please. Please. Don't be a baby. Okay? Take a look. Okay? Just take a look. Look at what's happening. Look at the Mexican soldiers that are laying on the ground. Take a look. These are hardened -- I didn't say in all cases -- but in many cases, these are hardened criminals. These are tough, tough people. And I don't want them in our country, and neither does our country want them in our country. Okay?

Thank you all very much. Thank you. Thank you very much.

END

5:45 P.M. MST

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release October 19, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
AT DEFENSE ROUNDTABLE

Luke Air Force Base
Maricopa County, Arizona

5:07 P.M. MST

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it's great talent around this beautiful room. And thank you all for being here. By the way, the head of Boeing and the head of Lockheed, and the head of Raytheon and the head of everything else, we have them all. We have them all around. So thank you all for being here. It's an honor.

I want to thank General Todd Canterbury for the tour. That's pretty lethal weaponry. I've been going around the last week or so, more so than ever -- I've been saying we make the greatest -- the greatest military equipment in the world. Not even a contest. There's nothing close. And every other country knows it. And, you know, we're talking about something right now, where a particular country ordered -- you'll never guess who this is -- about \$110 billion worth of equipment. And I assume you'd like to keep those orders probably. (Laughter.)

PARTICIPANT: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: But if you don't -- Boeing, Dennis -- you can let me know. (Laughter.) It'll make things a lot easier. But you make the best, and that's why you have it.

Also, Luke Air Force Base -- I've heard about it for so long; so good. Top of the line, isn't it? Huh? Thank you very much, General.

I also want to thank our roundtable participants today: Secretary Wilbur Ross, doing a great job. All those trade deals we're making, Wilbur. Right? Representative Martha McSally, who is a special woman. And I met her when she was in Congress, and we work together well. She's a great pilot. A lot of people told me she's really a talented pilot as opposed to one that just about made it. She made it easily. And she likes a specific plane; we won't tell them what the plane is. (Laughter.) They don't make that plane anymore.

REPRESENTATIVE MCSALLY: (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. But she's been fantastic.

Also, Representative Tom O'Halleran, thank you very much. Where's Tom? Tom? What are you doing over there, Tom? You can join us, even though you're a Democrat. (Laughter.) Representative Debbie Lesko. And, Debbie, a great job you've done. You've done a great job. We worked hard a couple years ago --

REPRESENTATIVE LESKO: We did.

THE PRESIDENT: And now your district loves you, right?

REPRESENTATIVE LESKO: I sure hope so.

THE PRESIDENT: They better.

REPRESENTATIVE LESKO: More elections in one year, I'll tell you.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, that's true. You set a record.

REPRESENTATIVE LESKO: Well, welcome to my district.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you very much. It's great to be here. Thank you.

Also, Secretary -- Deputy Secretary Patrick Shanahan. And, Patrick, thanks. Great job you -- he's a good purchaser of equipment. I hope you find that he negotiates well, because if he doesn't, I'm going to be very disappointed. What do you think, Dennis? Is he okay?

MR. MUILENBURG: He's tough.

THE PRESIDENT: Huh?

MR. MUILENBURG: He's tough. He's good.

THE PRESIDENT: I would expect you to say that. (Laughter.) Dennis is Boeing.

So thank you very much, Patrick. And it's been great working with you. And we have -- we've made some big purchases, some good deals. A little bit better than presented. And it's the best. There's nothing like the stuff.

Secretary Heather Wilson -- Heather, thank you very much. Appreciate it. Thank you. Great job you're doing. Under Secretary Ellen Lord, thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Ellen. You're keeping busy, right?

UNDER SECRETARY LORD: Absolutely.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. I think so. And all of the outstanding representatives who join us today from America's aerospace and defense industries, civil society. I mean, if you look at the civil society and the business society, it's been pretty amazing what's happened over the last two years. And you're all doing well, and we're doing well. The country is doing well. We're setting new records on jobs. We've got every category -- just about every category is a new record, or very close. And a lot of them work for you. A lot of them work for your great companies. And they are great companies. Thank you very much.

This incredible state is home to six major military installations, more than 30,000 military personnel, and thousands of defense companies. Arizona's military industry supports 76,000 jobs -- that's big -- and creates \$11.5 billion in economic output.

So what state would be comparable or larger? Is it larger? I mean, Texas does great.

REPRESENTATIVE MCSALLY: I think we're number three. I think we're number three on the list.

THE PRESIDENT: Number three? All right. But knowing you, you'll be --

REPRESENTATIVE MCSALLY: (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: She'll be number one very quickly. That's why she's doing so well. They all know.

The United States must always invest in a strong military. And it's been very important for me. The military has been vital. That's why we had, Wilbur, \$700 billion approved last year, and \$716 billion this year. And, General, everybody that passes me, from the military, thanks me for the new equipment. We were very depleted, and we're not depleted anymore. Although the equipment is pouring in, but we're not depleted anymore. So that's fantastic.

We've secured record funding for the armed forces. The funds will support new fighter jets, ships, tanks, thousands of new recruits. And we also gave something very important, and that was a pay increase -- the first in 10 years. A nice, substantial pay increase to the people that deserve it so badly.

And one of the things that was very important to me is to totally modernize and rebuild our nuclear arsenal. And we're doing that. And we will, very shortly, be in a position where there won't be anybody close -- not that we ever want to think about using it, but we're not going to use it. The best way, the only way is -- that's the way we don't have to use it, right? So we're doing a lot of work on that. And in a very short period of time -- already we're superior, but we will be at a level that nobody competes with.

Earlier this month, we released our landmark Defense Industrial Base report, which outlines new ways to strengthen our defense and manufacturing base. American-made military products are more effective, more lethal, and more precise than any other equipment in the world. And I've been going around saying that. And we have a lot of countries that are dying to order our stuff, but we don't like them that much, so we don't let them order. But overall, Marilyn, I don't think you're complaining, right? And that F-35 is special. That is a special -- that's a special fighter, right? It's great.

So we have to ensure that our warriors -- our brave, brave warriors -- have the resources that they need and deserve, and that our allies and partners continue to purchase American products. We want them to purchase our products. They're the best products.

Joining us today are several inspiring leaders who all share my commitment to supporting our military. And they're making America more prosperous, more competitive, secure and proud. And we really do. I mean, I know these people pretty well. I knew them a little bit in private industry. I know them a lot from what I've been doing for the last almost two years. Can you believe that, Dennis? It's almost two years already.

We just gave him an order for Air Force One. Air Force One now is 30 years old. And it was time. And they wanted to do it for the last two administrations; they never got it done. But we got it done.

MR. MUILENBURG: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: And hopefully you're going to speed it up. (Laughter.)

MR. MUILENBURG: Going fast.

THE PRESIDENT: And it's going to be incredible. Actually, Boeing is doing it. It's going to be a new color system: red, white, and blue. And it looks phenomenal. It's the right color system. And if it looks as good as it does in print and in the models, it's going to be fantastic. Right? So I hope you're moving along. That's moving along very fast, I hear.

MR. MUILENBURG: Yep. We're moving fast and continuing to focus on getting it delivered.

THE PRESIDENT: Very good. Very good. So I just want to thank you all for being here.

And if you have any questions, I'd like -- maybe before that, I'd like to introduce Martha McSally, say a few words. She is very special. A person that has taken the whole country by storm. They're talking about her all over the country.

I don't know -- I don't want to make you feel a little bit like, "Oh, gee, what's happening," but they're talking about you all over the country. And I fully understand that, and I got it a long time ago. I think you're going to be very, very successful.

This is a non-politician who is brilliant and brave, and became a politician, and was very successful. Her area, her district loved her. And now, as you know -- as some of you know, she's running for the Senate in Arizona. She has a very, very strange opponent. (Laughter.) I have to tell you, Martha, that should be easy, but you got to get in there fighting, right? Huh?

REPRESENTATIVE MCSALLY: (Inaudible) capacity.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. I know. Official is right. So anyway, please say a few words, Martha. We're very proud of you. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE MCSALLY: Thank you, President Trump. I really appreciate you spending the day here and taking the time to come to Luke Air Force Base. I mean, this base has a long history here in Arizona of being part of keeping our country safe. And we have such tremendous partners here around the community, in the West Valley, that are very committed to making sure that this base is protected and that our airmen are protected. And we've got the Fight Country partnership as well. They're just amazing, the partnership. We've got the same kind of partnership in southern Arizona -- the Southern Arizona Defense Alliance here.

It's just -- in Arizona, I can't -- I mean, I've been stationed in a lot of different places. But Arizona is special. And I guess everybody might say that, but I really feel that in my heart. Because so many people here have served, so many people came here to serve, or even came here to work at one of these companies. And then they choose to say, like, this is where I want to be, this is where I want to stay, this is where I want to retire.

But there is this partnership amongst the communities to support our troops and our bases and our defense industry that is really unmatched around the country. And I think everybody nodding here will tell you, it's really special. And I think it sets the example for the rest of the country. And that's everyone from -- again, I'm thinking about it; you know, I've shot some of their air missiles and used their rescue equipment. (Laughter.) We could go around the room. I mean, in the defense industry -- I don't want to leave anybody out -- but they are patriots wearing civilian clothes as well. And many of these industries have chosen to locate here.

Also, Arizona is a great state, right? It's a great state to live. It's a great state to relocate your family. So all that comes with that has just been so critical for us here in Arizona. And these representations, these leaders who have people who are coming with their families to be a part of the team, which is -- they're partnering us to equip the warfighter, to make sure that we keep our country safe.

So it's not just our military who's doing that. It's the engineers every day that are finding new capabilities for us, that are working at each of these industries. You know, I just visited yesterday -- just the idea of, like, "We're going to break through on some these things, and we're going to provide better capabilities to be able to go rescue downed airmen." And the commitment that they have is extraordinary. And that's at every company here.

And these organizations -- Yuma 50, (inaudible) -- I mean, they're doing everything from helping our deployed airmen's families -- or all the services, when they're deployed -- you know, get their oil changed; you know, help with daycare. I mean, you name it. The things that they do to step in, where the military has some legal limitations, and the civilian community, civic society steps in, it's really extraordinary.

So I just want to leave it at that. I'm so grateful for allowing me to be here. And thank you for coming to see this.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it's a great state. We love Arizona. General, could you maybe talk about Luke a little bit? Because it's got a big reputation.

GENERAL CANTERBURY: Yes, sir. It is an honor and privilege to lead the more than 5,600 men and women of Luke Air Force Base. Our mission is simple: We train the world's greatest fighter pilots here. Luke Air Force Base is responsible for training about 95 percent of the United States' Air Force fighter pilots between the 944th Wing and our 56th Fighter Wing. And it is an honor to use the equipment that these men and women provide to us, and the taxpayers provide to us to use this equipment. And we're not going to fail, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: And your father was the boss here too, right? (Laughter.)

GENERAL CANTERBURY: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: He showed me a picture. They looked like twins. He showed me a picture. And he's still around, he's still healthy, and he's still telling you what to do, right?

GENERAL CANTERBURY: Yes, sir. (Laughter.) Every night (inaudible) debrief, and he's anxiously awaiting a phone call at night, sir. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. You give him my regards.

GENERAL CANTERBURY: Thank you, sir. Will do.

Marillyn, maybe you could tell us a little about what's going on with Lockheed Martin.

MR. HEWSON: Well, Mr. President, thank you for the opportunity to participate in this important conversation, especially right here at Luke, where this is the largest F-35 base in the world, and growing. We have -- you know, with the aircraft that are coming in here, you highlighted how important the capability is for our nation. And it is the best capability.

But the study that you referenced, I just want to thank you for commissioning that. I think it's very important, because American aerospace and defense is a major part of the economic strength of this country. And when we look at 2.4 million jobs in aerospace and defense, and a trade surplus of \$86 billion, we know it's important that your study that you commissioned uncovered that we do have fragility in the supply chain, we do have capabilities that we need to bolster.

And so we're very pleased to be working with your administration, with the Department of Defense, on those recommendations that came out of that. So thank you for the opportunity to be here.

THE PRESIDENT: So, on the F-35, has the stealth gotten even better? Because it was always considered extraordinary. Has it really been upped, or is it at that same level, would you say?

MS. HEWSON: Well, I would say, sir, that we're at the point where we delivered over 300 aircraft, and the aircraft were out of the initial design phase, and this is (inaudible) design phase. Now, we'll do upgrades to the aircraft, whether it's software and other things over time that the U.S. government will commission industry to do.

So we'll keep it ahead of the threat. That's the goal. And (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: And it is ahead. It's a great plane. Thank you very much.

Dennis, from Boeing?

MR. MUILENBURG: Well, thank you, Mr. President, for being here as well. And I think as you saw earlier, you saw one of our Apache helicopters here as well.

THE PRESIDENT: That's true. Wow.

MR. MUILENBURG: Another great product produced here in the state of Arizona.

THE PRESIDENT: That's something.

MR. MUILENBURG: We had chance to go down and see our team in Mesa earlier today, and really proud to support our servicemen and women. And training for the future, as well, with the new T-X trainer that will be coming online -- we're looking forward to supporting our U.S. Air Force customer there, as well.

And I want to thank you again for the emphasis on the strength of the industrial base here. And you referenced the report, as did Marillyn. And investing in aerospace and defense is a great thing for the country -- economically; from a national security standpoint. And in particular, some of your policies around tax reform and regulatory reform is sustaining the gains there. Really important. That's allowing us to invest and innovate in defense.

I think we have challenges in the workforce side and our supply chain strength for the future -- areas where we're going to continue to work.

THE PRESIDENT: Now you can solve those challenges.

MR. MUILENBURG: You got it. And I think the work we're doing together on workforce development and training is very effective there.

We've got teammates here from our supply chain. Marti McCurdy here -- who runs Spirit Electronics, one of our small businesses in our supply chain here in Arizona -- is a great example of investing in that supply chain.

So we want to thank you for those policies.

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't know you made the missiles to the extent. I'm looking outside, and I was very surprised, actually. Boeing -- a lot of them had the name Boeing on them. I didn't know that was a great specialty of yours. Tell us about that.

MR. MUILENBURG: Yeah, that's a big area of investment for us as well. So things like the JDAM, which is used significantly around the world. Very effective for our servicemen and women. Small Diameter Bomb is another example. So you saw some of those today.

So again, we're honored to do that on behalf of our U.S. men and women in uniform. We take that job very seriously. And it was mentioned earlier -- the importance of our veterans and investing in our veterans. So thank you for what you're doing there. Veterans in the workforce, as well, is a big deal to all of us.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dennis. You're doing a great job.

MR. MUILENBURG: So you have some great talent there.

THE PRESIDENT: Some incredible things you're coming up with. Thank you very much.

Would anybody like to say anything while we're all gathered together? Anybody have any complaints or any suggestions? (Laughter.) Would anybody -- come up with any great ideas?

REPRESENTATIVE LESKO: Mr. President, I would love to say thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, Debbie.

REPRESENTATIVE LESKO: I would love to say thank you. It's so refreshing to have a President that is so strong in supporting the military and the veterans. And we appreciate it. The American public appreciates it. I mean, that's the number-one mission of government, is to protect its people. And you're doing it. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Debbie. That's really nice. Appreciate it. Anybody? Yes, sir.

MR. BRADY: Mr. President, you know, we do your encryption equipment in the White House.

THE PRESIDENT: Right. That's right.

MR. BRADY: Voice and data. But like I was saying to Secretary Ross -- you know, we have -- we can only keep a lead so long if all of our stuff is getting stolen the moment we design it. And the cyber threat is not being properly addressed. And there's capabilities, even in the products you have --

THE PRESIDENT: So what would you do about that, Chris? You're right. And they should have been doing this for 15 years, and they haven't been.

MR. BRADY: Yep.

THE PRESIDENT: So what would you do? Your company is a great company. What would you do about it?

MR. BRADY: Well, so we already ship network encryptors. We've embedded capability in those encryptors to pick up the signatures of threats and attacks, even the classified signatures, and store them safely. But we're not turning them on. It's not being used.

THE PRESIDENT: So why don't we get somebody that you would recommend, and let's bring them into government, and let's do it the right way. Because you know, it's such a specific kind of a thing. It's great knowledge involved. You can't just hire somebody off the street and say, "Hey, congratulations, you're in charge of cyber."

MR. BRADY: But the NSA has the capability to understand that. And we have --

THE PRESIDENT: They have some really good people.

MR. BRADY: And we have industry partners, like Viasat and others, that do products that can do things like that. Together we can get that stuff turned on.

When you put this -- when you turn it on, it lights up like a Christmas tree. The threats are coming every day. I mean, it's probably more than your normal traffic. And we're getting compromised every day.

THE PRESIDENT: So do we have the equipment? We definitely have the knowledge. Where are we on the scale of knowledge right now, would you say?

MR. BRADY: We're very good at tracking the threats, but we're also very stingy about disseminating the information we already know about the threats.

THE PRESIDENT: Right. Right.

MR. BRADY: That's what the fear is in the intelligence community, is to let some of that information live in these boxes that we believe are secure. But that's the only way we can defend all of our installations against these kinds of attacks.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'd like to talk to you about it.

MR. BRADY: I would love to.

THE PRESIDENT: Because I agree with you, it's very important. And there's great knowledge that you have from your company, but there's -- and others here have that great knowledge. Very important -- cyber. And I hear more and more about cyber. And we have the brainpower. We have potentially -- I mean, there's nobody that should be able to event compete with us, with what we have just around this table.

So, Jerry, any of you, if you have any ideas, let us know. We'll do something. Because we're going to do something. We've already started. But I'd rather start it from this table than any other table in the world. Does that make sense? You understand that? We have the brainpower right around this table.

So, good. Thank you, Chris. That's fantastic.

Would you like to say something?

SECRETARY WILSON: Well, sir, I'd leave it to the community leaders here (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: You're doing a great job though. I think everyone said it.

SECRETARY WILSON: Our job is to keep the country keep safe, sir. And the F-35 is part of that. We like winning. And the F-35 wins.

THE PRESIDENT: It's a great plane. Great plane. So when is Boeing going to make one to compete with it? (Inaudible.) (Laughter.)

SECRETARY WILSON: They just gave us the T-X.

THE PRESIDENT: You know what, though? You do have -- you do have that.

MR. MUILENBURG: We're in the fighter business, as well.

THE PRESIDENT: And you do have some good --

MR. MUILENBURG: We do a lot of work together.

THE PRESIDENT: And you do have some good stuff, I have to tell you. Some really good stuff. But you are going to one of the super stealths right?

MR. MUILENBURG: Yeah, we're working all together on future technologies and what will happen next, and next-generation capabilities.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. Next generation.

MR. MUILENBURG: Because I think it's important that we continue as a country to invest in that innovation.

THE PRESIDENT: I agree.

MR. MUILENBURG: Next-step capabilities. We're doing that jointly with our customers.

THE PRESIDENT: Wilbur, do you have anything? Yes.

MS. HEWSON: Can I just say that, you know, you make a very important point about how national security also drives economic security. And on the F-35, today it supports 194,000 jobs across the United States and 1,500 U.S. suppliers.

So not only does it have the high capability that we need to keep our citizens safe and to work with our allies to make sure that we have protect and -- safe and secure environment for our people, but it also brings a lot of jobs. And even here at Luke, I think we have over 400 industry professionals, and that's growing to 700 in the next several years that are supporting F-35 on the base here. That's just a microcosm of all the jobs across the country.

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

MR. DEMURO: I would just add that another example. Even in combat vehicles, where the Army is recapitalizing its ground forces, the investments that are being made in the next generation as well as the modernization.

THE PRESIDENT: And you like what we're doing?

MR. DEMURO: Absolutely.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you agree with it?

MR. DEMURO: Eighteen-thousand jobs -- Pennsylvania, Michigan, Alabama, Oklahoma, all around the country, as you go through the supply chain. So it's a model that's being repeated over and over again.

THE PRESIDENT: And you think we're doing the right thing?

MR. DEMURO: Absolutely. Securing the interest of the United States? Absolutely.

THE PRESIDENT: That's very good, thank you.

MS. SMITH: Mr. President, I'm Amber Smith, the President and CEO of the Tucson Metro Chamber. But more importantly, I am one of the founding members and the current president of the Southern Arizona Defense Alliance.

And to the Congresswoman's point, we do exceptionally well at supporting our military. In fact, in southern Arizona, we even have the statistics that -- what was it -- 93 percent of our citizens support the six installations in southern Arizona.

But what's really exceptional are the public-private partnerships. And you see that around this table. And I want to thank you for the leadership you have shown in recognizing some really incredible workforce development programs in which we are placing veterans into jobs in the aerospace and defense industry.

And I was talking to Secretary Ross about the backend technology of this, which you've recognized that, civilianizing those HR codes of military, we'll be able to better place the billions of dollars of exceptional talent we have in our military into these jobs to help immediately address some of these workforce issues, and then be able to build our pipeline as well.

So thank you very much for recognizing that that exists, and supporting our pilot program in Tucson.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you, Amber. That's very nice. Thank you.

Wilbur?

SECRETARY ROSS: We're going to help publicize the event, the product that's coming out of her workforce.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. That's great.

SECRETARY ROSS: It's a very interesting idea.

We also got some very good suggestions, before you came here, about space. So there are a couple of recommendations I'm going to carry forward to Vice President Pence, for the Space Council --

THE PRESIDENT: So we're doing a new force. You know that right?

How does the Air Force feel about that? But we're doing a brand new force. And it'll be the Space Force. And everybody is excited. Whenever I mention it, everybody goes crazy and they like it. And that's what it's all about, I guess.

You know, those planes are all beautiful. But we're now going into space. And that's for defense. I mean, we're not just talking about sending rockets up to the moon. We're talking about for defense and for offense.

So I think, pretty soon, it's been well received even in Congress, bipartisan. And pretty soon we're going to have Space Force, so that'll be number six. And this way it can be specific. We'll have a great genius like yourself, comparable, maybe not as good, but pretty good. (Laughter.) And it'll have an extra person sitting on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and it's going to be full force. It's going to be very important. I think it's going to be a big contribution. Something very necessary.

Go ahead, Wilbur.

SECRETARY ROSS: So we had interchange about supply chain management, about all kinds of issues. And we especially addressed the problems of foreign procurement and the things that Congress can do to help them solve this problem.

So I thought it was a very, very worthwhile roundtable. I don't know how the rest of you felt, but it had very good interchange. And concrete suggestions will come from it.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, what do you think?

DEPUTY SECRETARY SHANAHAN: Sure. I think a lot of things. (Laughter.) You know, I'm just going to start with, I think, where Representative Lesko was.

Thank you. You've made us stronger. Under your leadership, we are stronger. And with Congress's support, we've got a budget that makes us stronger. When you look at where we've come in terms of readiness, we now have the munitions that we lacked before. Ships are sailing, airplanes are flying. And the most important piece is we're training more.

Something that probably most people here would also echo is your advocacy on foreign military sales is huge. That has not --

THE PRESIDENT: It's hurting me right now.

DEPUTY SECRETARY SHANAHAN: I know, but --

THE PRESIDENT: Right now, it's hurting me with these people.

DEPUTY SECRETARY SHANAHAN: I know. But your advocacy is significant for this industrial base. And I think the most important aspect is the budget will allow us to modernize so that we can compete. The modernization is the single most important work that we have to get to undertake. And we're undertaking it.

And you know, as you've counseled me, we need to be good stewards, buy smart, not over specifying. I think we'll do that. But thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: And when you say "compete," I would like to say so that nobody can even come to close to competing with us, as opposed to just competing. Because what I'm really doing is putting us in a position where there's not going to be anybody even close.

And that's why we're -- again, we're looking at all of the planes, all of the weapons, all of the rockets, all of the -- everything, including, obviously, the nuclear. You hate to even bring up the nuclear because it's a -- it's such an incredible threat. But we have no choice but to do it because others do it. It would be nice if nobody would do it. Right, Dennis? It would be great. But doesn't seem to be that way.

So I just want to thank everybody at the table. Would any of you folks have a question for anybody at the table? We have the greatest talent in the world at this table. Anybody have any questions?

Q Can we ask you one question about the Saudis, sir? There's been a reaction -- there's been a statement from Saudi Arabia. (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. I just saw it. Just came out.

Q What was your reaction to that? Do you consider (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think it's a good first step. It's a big step. It's a lot of people. A lot of people involved. And I think it's a great first step.

You probably know that very fair person, Reuters -- and you probably know that -- you are; you're very good. Very, very good.

We have a tremendous order. Probably the people around this table have the vast percentage of the \$110-billion order from Saudi. We have \$450 billion. But on defense, we have \$110 billion. And I would say, almost 100 percent of it would be sitting right around this table with the great companies. Raytheon is here, too. Just great companies.

It's very important. I don't want to tell them -- I don't want to look over and tell Marilyn or Dennis, "By the way, we're going to take \$25 billion worth of sales away from you," because that would mean a lot of jobs, it would mean a lot of everything.

And Saudi Arabia has been a great ally. But what happened is unacceptable. We are going to see. They've arrested -- just for the people at the table -- a large number of people having to do with the event that took place in Turkey and the consulate -- the Saudi consulate. And it's a big first step. It's only a first step, but it's a big first step.

Q Do you consider it credible, their explanation, for --

THE PRESIDENT: I do. I do. I mean, it's -- again, it's early. We haven't finished our review or investigation. But it's -- I think it's a very important first step, and it happened sooner than people thought it would happen.

Q Did you know, sir, that it was a fistfight? And as result of the fistfight, Mr. Khashoggi was killed. (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't know that that was -- I don't know that that's -- I mean, that's a theory that's being thrown out. I don't think anybody said that. But they're saying there was a fight. But that's a theory that was put out. But they're going to be giving us a full report. But they have arrested a large number of people, and a good first step.

Yeah?

Q Sir, are you concerned that they -- the leadership there lied to you, or other members of the administration, when they denied --

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't think so at all. Because they weren't out front with me in terms of, you know, what happened. This is really a -- we just got this report from them. And you got it, along with a lot of other people. No. I think that we'll be talking to them. We'll see what happens. We may have some questions. We do have some questions.

And as I told you, I'll be working on this with Congress. Congress is very interested in this one, and we'll be working with Congress. But I would prefer, if there is going to be some form of sanctions, or what we may determine to do, if anything -- because this was a lot of people they're talking about, and people pretty high up. But I would prefer that we don't use, as retribution, cancelling \$110 billion worth of work, which means 600,000 jobs.

I know it sounds easy and it sounds good, and a lot people have said, "Oh, let's just not sell them a \$110-billion order." I guess you take it a step further, "Let's not sell them \$450 billion," which is the largest order in the history of our country. I went there to get that order. Saudi Arabia was my first stop. And everyone thought that was unusual. But I said, I want to order -- "I want you to order a tremendous amount of stuff." Right? Everything. Your stuff and everybody's stuff. And Wilbur was there. They ordered \$450 billion. There's never been anything like it, or close.

The last thing I want to do is say we're not going to supply you with that, and therefore we're going to cut -- I guess, if you add the whole thing up, because just for the military was 600,000 jobs. So now if you're talking about -- that was \$110 billion -- you know, you're talking about over a million jobs. You know, I'd rather keep the million jobs, and I'd rather find another solution.

But this was a good first step today. Okay?

Anything? Yeah.

Q Mr. President, Lindsay Graham said he's very skeptical of the Saudi narrative. Are you -- do you share some of that skepticism, too? And do you intend to speak with the Crown Prince or the King in the next day or two to get their side of the story?

THE PRESIDENT: I will -- yeah. Before I start making those statements, I'm going to speak to the Crown Prince. And I've spoken to the King. I want to speak with the Crown Prince.

And, you know, I think we're getting close to solving a very big problem. And again, remembering the people around this table know it better than anyone -- Martha McSally knows it better than anyone -- they've been a great ally in the Middle East. We need them as a counter-balance to Iran. And so it's not the simplest solution. It's not the simplest situation to be in.

But I think we're doing very well, and I think we've come a long way in a short period of time. And it'll get solved. It'll get solved. Okay?

Yeah, please.

Q Sir, do you trust the Saudis to carry out an impartial investigation given that the Crown Prince is kind of in charge of it? Or do you think a third party should be involved?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we have third parties involved. We're involved. You know, we're involved. Turkey is involved. And I wouldn't say they're exactly friends. I would think that Turkey and Saudi Arabia -- they're not too friendly. And Turkey is involved, and others are involved, frankly.

I mean, it's -- people are not happy about what happened. But this is a very big turnover when you look at the number of people that they say were involved. That was a very big -- that was a very important thing that they did. And they did it soon. They did it -- you know, we thought it was going to be the end of next week. They did it soon, which I think is very smart.

But, no, I would have to say they have been our ally. We've had great relationships with them. This is a horrible event. It has not gone unnoticed. Okay?

Q Mr. President, can you speak to the family separations policy, where you're at on that? Arizona has been one of the places where this has been going on.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we have -- Mexico has really stepped up to the plate, which is very nice. I've said to them, "Look, you know..." We've been very nice to Mexico. We have the worst immigration laws in the history of the world. They're incompetent. And, in fact, we have a great Democrat here; maybe we could negotiate some immigration laws while you're here?

REPRESENTATIVE O'HALLERAN: I'd love to negotiate that. (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: You, I would like to do it with, because you know what you are doing.

REPRESENTATIVE O'HALLERAN: Comprehensive --

THE PRESIDENT: That's -- we have just a horrible situation with the laws. The laws don't allow us to do anything. And then we have the judges that are, let's say, that are giving us decisions that are horrendous. And, hopefully, they'll be overturned in the Supreme Court, or sooner.

But I don't know if you know what's happening. And probably a lot of the people at the table don't know what's happening because this just happened. But people are coming over from Honduras; they have like 5,000 people.

Honduras and Guatemala, El Salvador. And some of these people are hard criminals. Hardened criminals. Not good people. And they broke through in Guatemala. I said, "Look, we give you hundreds of millions of dollars, Guatemala. And you're going to stop those people from coming."

And they tried, and they broke right through, and they broke through the fences. And Mexico is now really fighting. A very tough situation. Mexican soldiers have been hurt -- badly hurt, in a couple of cases. But I very much respect the fact that Mexico is willing to do this.

But these are some bad people coming through. These aren't babies. These aren't little angels coming into our country, and going to -- you know, go to work for Boeing, and go to work for Raytheon, and for Lockheed, and do a great job. These are some hardened criminals coming in. And we're not letting them in. We've got enough things right now. We're just not letting it happen.

So, Mexico, on their southern border, is fighting them right now. Literally, fighting them. And these people are fighting, and they put all the women and children up front to show you how brave they are. They put all the women and children up front. And it's a terrible situation.

And if we had laws, I could sit down, and you give me a group from the Democrats -- I could sit down and in one hour, we would solve catch and release, by getting rid of it. You know what catch and release is, Dennis? They walk over; if they put one foot on our land, we catch them. We then take the information, because we have -- it's impossible to bring them to a court. We have to bring them to a court. So we bring them to a court, but the court is never there because you don't have enough judges. There aren't enough judges in the world. If you've got every judge in the world, you don't have enough judges. So you catch them and you release them. And they go into our society, because you're not allowed to release them back into theirs. And that's one of the better ones, okay? It's just a horrible situation.

We have the visa lottery, where we take people by lottery from countries. Now, just -- you know, from a business standpoint, do you think they're giving us their finest? We get some real beauties out of the lottery. These countries -- I mean, they're not stupid. They give us people that they don't want. And we have to take them.

So I could sit down with Democrats and work this thing out in one hour. And we need a wall. We have to have a wall. We're building a wall now, but we should build it very fast. We should built it -- frankly, we should build it even higher, because these people -- incredible. They can scale them; they can do things you wouldn't believe.

But we have a wall, it's going up. But we should be able to build that in one year. And we could do it in one year. So we'll see what happens. I think this is going to be a real wake-up call for the Democrats and for the public. And for the public. People are very angry about it. Very, very angry. Okay.

Any other questions? Yeah.

Q Mr. President, what evidence do you have that these are hardened criminals trying to come into the United States?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, please. Please. Don't be a baby. Okay? Take a look. Okay? Just take a look. Look at what's happening. Look at the Mexican soldiers that are laying on the ground. Take a look. These are hardened -- I didn't say in all cases -- but in many cases, these are hardened criminals. These are tough, tough people. And I don't want them in our country, and neither does our country want them in our country. Okay?

Thank you all very much. Thank you. Thank you very much.

END

5:45 P.M. MST

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 11, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
AT SIGNING OF S. 3508, THE "SAVE OUR SEAS ACT of 2018"

Oval Office

11:27 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Thank you very much. I very much appreciate your being here. We have hurricane reports on Hurricane Michael. Unbelievably destructive, powerful.

The one good thing we can say -- we were just discussing -- is that it was the fastest hurricane anybody has seen. It just was speedy. If it wasn't, there would be absolutely nothing left. It was incredibly powerful. You've seen the destruction.

It's moving through Georgia now at a much lesser pace both in terms of speed and in terms of its power -- 50, 60-mile-an-hour winds. But some of those winds reached almost 200 miles an hour, which is unheard of. People are saying it's the third most powerful that they've seen hit our country anywhere.

We've done -- I'll tell you, FEMA has gotten rave reviews. The first responders, law enforcement -- everybody has gotten rave reviews. I just spoke with Governor Scott. They're very happy. Food is being now -- following the hurricane -- being now brought in. We have unbelievable large amounts of water and food and everything that people can want.

The electric companies have been terrific. They're already working. The roads are being cleared out. Many trees are in the path of the electric companies.

The roads are being cleaned right now. They're being -- for the most part, they're open enough to get the electric companies in. And a lot of electricity is already back on. Some of the off electricity is already back on. That's in Florida. They're following up in Georgia.

A lot of water will be in North and South Carolina, added to the horrible situation they had with Florence two weeks ago. But they're incredible people and they know how to do it. They've done it before and they'll do it again. But they know how to do it.

So we've had great reports in everything. The only -- the big problem with this hurricane was the tremendous power. And fortunately, it was very fast. It went through Florida very, very quickly. It didn't linger. It didn't come back as we had in Texas, where it actually came back a second time and then a third time. It went out, filled up, came back. This one went very quickly. But it's tremendous destruction in the areas where it -- the path that it chose is incredible, the kind of destruction. We've not seen destruction like that in a long time.

But it's -- the rebuilding, I can actually say -- the rebuilding process and the survivor-looking process, we hope we don't have too much of that. The area most affected was, hopefully, 100 percent evacuated, but there's always somebody that stays. And in this case, they would have been in big trouble.

But so far, the reports, as you know, are very good. So I want to thank you for that.

And I don't know if you have any questions on the hurricane. Does anybody have any questions?

Q Do you have enough time to focus on the hurricane? You have a very busy day at the White House. Obviously, Kanye West is here and --

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, I do. I have a very busy day today. We're doing -- as you know, we're doing -- having to do with copyright music. We're doing, right now, the Save Our Seas Act of 2018, which is a very important thing. But I -- and yesterday I had a tremendous rally in Pennsylvania, and we had thousands of people lined up. And I just couldn't -- you couldn't tell those people -- and they were there for a day and a half before.

And I couldn't tell people that had been standing in line for a day and a half, wanting to get into the arena, that I'm not going. I went there. We had great control over what we were doing both on Air Force One, at the White House, and in Florida.

And I think you're seeing we're getting tremendous marks for the job that we did. And I wasn't going to disappoint thousands and thousands of people who have been standing in line for, in some cases, a day and a half. I wasn't going to do that.

But I think we've really, really done a job. This is a particularly busy day because we're signing a number of bills. Very different kinds of bills. So you'll be seeing me a little while later, I think with a couple of the senators standing behind me right now. And you'll be seeing me and us in a little while.

And we're having lunch with Jim Brown, one of the great football players of all time and a great guy, and Kanye West. He's coming in -- they're coming in for lunch. And after that, we're doing some additional interesting things.

But we have a busy day. But I always have a busy day.

And the economy is doing really well. Jobs are looking -- we think jobs are going to be better than ever. And we think records are broken already, but we're going to continue to break the records.

So let's talk about the Save Our Seas Act, if we could. And again, thank you all for being here. I want to thank also the members of Congress that are with us. That's Senator Dan Sullivan, who's been absolutely terrific; worked along with Sheldon Whitehouse. And these two have been spearheading something that's very important, and we want to thank you both.

Sheldon, thank you very much.

SENATOR WHITEHOUSE: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. We appreciate it. Really do. I know you worked very hard on that.

SENATOR WHITEHOUSE: Worked well together.

THE PRESIDENT: And, Mr. Sullivan, thank you very much for being here. We appreciate it very much.

We have Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross who worked along with the senators, and Acting NOAA Administrator Admiral Tim Gallaudet. You're here, and thank you for being here, Tim. Thank you very much. Great job you're doing.

Every year, over 8 million tons of garbage is dumped into our beautiful oceans by many countries of the world. That includes China, that includes Japan, and that includes many, many countries.

This waste, trash, and debris harms not only marine life, but also fishermen, coastal economies along America's vast stretches. The bad news is it floats toward us. I've seen pictures recently, and some of you have seen them, where there's -- a vast, tremendous, unthinkable amount of garbage is floating right into our coast, in particular along the West Coast.

And we're charged with removing it, which is a very unfair situation. It comes from other countries very far away. It takes six months and a year to float over, but it gets here, and it's a very unfair situation. It's also unbelievably bad for the oceans.

Every year, over 8 million tons of garbage is dumped into our beautiful oceans. And when you think of that number -- I mean, to think 8 million tons -- and I would say it's probably -- Senators, I think it's probably more than that, based on what I've seen and based on the kind of work that I've seen being done.

This dumping has happened for years and even for decades. Previous administrations did absolutely nothing to take on the foreign countries responsible. We've already notified most of them and we've notified them very strongly.

The Save Our Seas Act will help address this problem by extending the Marine Debris Program for five additional years. We also are strengthening that up to improve waste management overseas and clean up our nation's water. We will boost the federal government's response to ocean waste by authorizing the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to declare severe marine debris events, which happen all the time. It's incredible. It's incredible when you look at it. People don't realize it, but all the time we're being inundated by debris from other countries.

This legislation will release funds to states for cleanup and for response efforts. And we will be responding and very strongly.

The legislation also encourages the executive branch to engage with those nations responsible for dumping garbage into our oceans. My administration is doing exactly that. For example, the new United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement is the first U.S. trade agreement ever to include commitments by the parties to cooperate to address land- and sea-based pollution and improve waste management.

And I can tell you that Dan and Sheldon were very insistent on trying to get that into the USMCA, the new agreement that we have with Canada and Mexico. And we'll be putting it into other agreements also.

The United States has some of the most beautiful beaches and oceans in the world, and the coastlines are incredible. As President, I will continue to do everything I can to stop other nations from making our oceans into their landfills. That's why I'm pleased -- very pleased, I must say -- to put my signature on this important legislation.

And again, I'd like to thank Dan and Sheldon, and all of the people -- the Admiral and Wilbur -- all of the people that worked so hard on this. This was a tough one, but it had great bipartisan support.

What was the final vote?

SENATOR SULLIVAN: It was unanimous consent in the Senate.

THE PRESIDENT: Unanimous.

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Bipartisan. Did you ever think, Jon, you'd hear that? Bipartisan.

Q It's unusual to see Sheldon Whitehouse here.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that's pretty good. Can you imagine Trump and Whitehouse in the same area? It's all right. Hey, I have a lot of respect.

SENATOR SULLIVAN: And what the President said about the administration -- the Trump administration -- doing a great job on this, it's an underreported story but they are really taking the lead globally. And, Mr. President, we want to thank you for (inaudible) very bipartisan.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I want to thank you, and I want to thank Sheldon. Thank you. Come here, Sheldon. See, we can shake hands.

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Wilbur. Thank you. Admiral, thank you.

All right. Let's get this done properly here.

(The bill is signed.)

So with that, we're all completed. And I just want to say it's an honor. And hopefully that goes a long way for our oceans.

We've notified other countries that have been abusers. They abuse the ocean. We have notified them already about this. And they're doing things. They tell us they're doing things. And I think some cases at least they are. But they will be.

And I want to thank you very much.

SENATOR WHITEHOUSE: Thank you, Mr. President. The Philippines is up next, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that's right.

SENATOR WHITEHOUSE: The Philippines is up next. They're one of the worst three.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that's right. That's going to be interesting.

SENATOR WHITEHOUSE: So, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: So you're working on that?

SENATOR WHITEHOUSE: We are.

THE PRESIDENT: That's very good.

SENATOR WHITEHOUSE: With your trade team on the Philippine trade agreement. We'll make sure this is part of that.

THE PRESIDENT: We're okay with that. I understand. A lot comes from there.

Yes.

Q Mr. President, what exactly is the U.S. doing to investigate the missing Saudi journalist? You said there were U.S. investigators over there.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we're looking at it.

Q Could you explain what exactly that means?

THE PRESIDENT: We're looking at it very strongly. We'll be having a report out soon. We're working with Turkey, we're working with Saudi Arabia. What happened is a terrible thing, assuming that happened. I mean, maybe we'll be pleasantly surprised, but somehow I tend to doubt it. And we take it very seriously.

Q Does the U.S. have any kind of responsibility to warn him if (inaudible) were picked up?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it's not our country. It's in Turkey, and it's not a citizen, as I understand it. But a thing like that shouldn't happen. It is a reporter with the Washington Post, and it's -- something like that should not be allowed to happen. Something like that should not happen. And we intend to get to the bottom of it.

Yes.

Q Mr. President, you have talked a little bit about the markets. The markets are down again, today. How long do you think this correction, which you said was coming anyway, is expected to last?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're still up 40 percent for the period of time. So, I mean, the markets are way up over what they were. It's a correction that I think is caused by the Federal Reserve with interest rates. The dollar has become very strong, which, frankly, people can debate whether or not they like a strong dollar or not.

The dollar is very strong, very powerful. And that causes a little difficulty with doing business, frankly. A strong dollar doesn't necessarily mean all good, but we do have a very strong dollar. And we have interest rates going up at a clip that's much faster than certainly a lot of people, including myself, would have anticipated.

I think the Fed is out of control. I think what they're doing it wrong. Under the Obama administration, you had a lot of help because they had very little interest. You know, when you talk about economies, our economy is far better than that. But we have actually -- we're paying interest. And they weren't. They were using funny money.

But I think the Fed is far too stringent, and they're making a mistake and it's not right.

And it's -- despite that, we're doing very well but it's not necessary, in my opinion. And I think I know about it better than they do. Believe me.

Q Would you consider firing the Fed Chairman? I mean, is his job secure?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I'm not going to fire him. I'm just disappointed at the clip. I think it's far too fast. Far too rigid, far too fast.

Q Mr. President, after what happened with the Soyuz capsule today, are you at all worried that American astronauts have to rely on the Russians to get into space? Because you've been talking about Space Force.

THE PRESIDENT: No, I'm not worried. We have a tremendous space program going right now, in addition to which you're going to have the Space Force. I think by next year we intend to have that. It's already in this budget. And we'll have our own everything. But no, I'm not at all. Not at all worried at all.

Q Will Jamal Khashoggi's case affect the way you deal with MBS or other Saudi officials?

THE PRESIDENT: We'll have to see what happens. A lot of work is being done on that, and we're going to have to see what happens. I don't like stopping massive amounts of money that's being poured into our country on -- I know they're talking about different kinds of sanctions, but they're spending \$110 billion on military equipment and on things that create jobs, like jobs and others, for this country.

I don't like the concept of stopping an investment of \$110 billion into the United States. Because you know what they're going to do? They're going to take that money and spend it in Russia or China, or someplace else. So I think there are other ways. If it turns out to be as bad as it might be, there are certainly other ways of handling the situation.

But I will tell you, upfront, right now, and I'll say it in front of senators: They're spending \$110 billion purchasing military equipment and other things. If we don't sell it to them, they'll say, "Well, thank you very much. We'll buy it from Russia." Or "Thank you very much. We'll buy it from China." That doesn't help us -- not when it comes to jobs and not when it comes to our companies losing out on that work.

But there are other things we can do. Let's find out what the problem is first. Okay?

Q You mean sanctions in that case? You oppose sanctions against Saudi Arabia?

THE PRESIDENT: I oppose -- I would not be in favor of stopping a country from spending \$110 billion -- which is an all-time record -- and letting Russia have that money and letting China have that money. Because all they're going to do is say, "That's okay. We don't have to buy it from Boeing. We don't have to buy it from Lockheed. We don't have to buy it from Raytheon and all these great companies. We'll buy it from Russia. We'll but it from China."

So what good does that do us? There are other things we can do.

Q Well, do you think they should pay a price if it turns out that the Saudis are responsible?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. There'll be something that has to take place. First, I want to find out what happened. And we're looking. Again, this took place in Turkey. And to the best of our knowledge, Khashoggi is not a United States citizen. Is that right? Or is that --

Q Permanent resident.

THE PRESIDENT: He's a permanent resident. Okay.

We don't like it, Jon. We don't like. And we don't like even a little bit. But as to whether or not we should stop \$110 billion from being spent in this country, knowing they have four or five alternatives, two very good alternatives -- that would not be acceptable to me.

Okay. But we're looking for the answer. And I think probably you'll have an answer sooner than people think.

Thank you very much. I'll see you in a little while.

Q We'll see you with Kanye later? Are you going to --

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. We're going to have you come in for Kanye for just a couple of seconds, okay?

Q Okay, great.

THE PRESIDENT: He'll be here and we're going to do a little -- you'll have a little fun. Okay?

Everybody asks about Kanye. You know, we have Kanye West and Jim Brown coming in. And everybody wants to know about --

Q (Inaudible) Jim Brown too.

THE PRESIDENT: I like Jim Brown. That Jim Brown is some running back. Hey, do you think the NFL would be paying him a couple of dollars nowadays?

What people don't know -- he might have been -- he was the greatest football player, perhaps. He may have been an even better lacrosse player. Did you know that? At Syracuse. He may have been an even better lacrosse player. And he's a great guy. And he's been with me for a long time. He's been a big supporter.

Thank you all very much. You'll come back in a little while.

END 11:45 A.M. EDT

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But so far, the reports, as you know, are very good. So I want to thank you for that.

And I don't know if you have any questions on the hurricane. Does anybody have any questions?

Q Do you have enough time to focus on the hurricane? You have a very busy day at the White House. Obviously, Kanye West is here and --

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, I do. I have a very busy day today. We're doing -- as you know, we're doing -- having to do with copyright music. We're doing, right now, the Save Our Seas Act of 2018, which is a very important thing. But I -- and yesterday I had a tremendous rally in Pennsylvania, and we had thousands of people lined up. And I just couldn't -- you couldn't tell those people -- and they were there for a day and a half before.

And I couldn't tell people that had been standing in line for a day and a half, wanting to get into the arena, that I'm not going. I went there. We had great control over what we were doing both on Air Force One, at the White House, and in Florida.

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But we have a busy day. But I always have a busy day.

And the economy is doing really well. Jobs are looking -- we think jobs are going to be better than ever. And we think records are broken already, but we're going to continue to break the records.

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Sheldon, thank you very much.

SENATOR WHITEHOUSE: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. We appreciate it. Really do. I know you worked very hard on that.

SENATOR WHITEHOUSE: Worked well together.

THE PRESIDENT: And, Mr. Sullivan, thank you very much for being here. We appreciate it very much.

We have Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross who worked along with the senators, and Acting NOAA Administrator Admiral Tim Gallaudet. You're here, and thank you for being here, Tim. Thank you very much. Great job you're doing.

Every year, over 8 million tons of garbage is dumped into our beautiful oceans by many countries of the world. That includes China, that includes Japan, and that includes many, many countries.

This waste, trash, and debris harms not only marine life, but also fishermen, coastal economies along America's vast stretches. The bad news is it floats toward us. I've seen pictures recently, and some of you have seen them, where there's -- a vast, tremendous, unthinkable amount of garbage is floating right into our coast, in particular along the West Coast.

And we're charged with removing it, which is a very unfair situation. It comes from other countries very far away. It takes six months and a year to float over, but it gets here, and it's a very unfair situation. It's also unbelievably bad for the oceans.

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This legislation will release funds to states for cleanup and for response efforts. And we will be responding and very strongly.

The legislation also encourages the executive branch to engage with those nations responsible for dumping garbage into our oceans. My administration is doing exactly that. For example, the new United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement is the first U.S. trade agreement ever to include commitments by the parties to cooperate to address land- and sea-based pollution and improve waste management.

And I can tell you that Dan and Sheldon were very insistent on trying to get that into the USMCA, the new agreement that we have with Canada and Mexico. And we'll be putting it into other agreements also.

The United States has some of the most beautiful beaches and oceans in the world, and the coastlines are incredible. As President, I will continue to do everything I can to stop other nations from making our oceans into their landfills. That's why I'm pleased -- very pleased, I must say -- to put my signature on this important legislation.

And again, I'd like to thank Dan and Sheldon, and all of the people -- the Admiral and Wilbur -- all of the people that worked so hard on this. This was a tough one, but it had great bipartisan support.

What was the final vote?

SENATOR SULLIVAN: It was unanimous consent in the Senate.

THE PRESIDENT: Unanimous.

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Bipartisan. Did you ever think, Jon, you'd hear that? Bipartisan.

Q It's unusual to see Sheldon Whitehouse here.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that's pretty good. Can you imagine Trump and Whitehouse in the same area? It's all right. Hey, I have a lot of respect.

SENATOR SULLIVAN: And what the President said about the administration -- the Trump administration -- doing a great job on this, it's an underreported story but they are really taking the lead globally. And, Mr. President, we want to thank you for (inaudible) very bipartisan.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I want to thank you, and I want to thank Sheldon. Thank you. Come here, Sheldon. See, we can shake hands.

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Wilbur. Thank you. Admiral, thank you.

All right. Let's get this done properly here.

(The bill is signed.)

So with that, we're all completed. And I just want to say it's an honor. And hopefully that goes a long way for our oceans.

We've notified other countries that have been abusers. They abuse the ocean. We have notified them already about this. And they're doing things. They tell us they're doing things. And I think some cases at least they are. But they will be.

And I want to thank you very much.

SENATOR WHITEHOUSE: Thank you, Mr. President. The Philippines is up next, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that's right.

SENATOR WHITEHOUSE: The Philippines is up next. They're one of the worst three.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that's right. That's going to be interesting.

SENATOR WHITEHOUSE: So, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: So you're working on that?

SENATOR WHITEHOUSE: We are.

THE PRESIDENT: That's very good.

SENATOR WHITEHOUSE: With your trade team on the Philippine trade agreement. We'll make sure this is part of that.

THE PRESIDENT: We're okay with that. I understand. A lot comes from there.

Yes.

Q Mr. President, what exactly is the U.S. doing to investigate the missing Saudi journalist? You said there were U.S. investigators over there.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we're looking at it.

Q Could you explain what exactly that means?

THE PRESIDENT: We're looking at it very strongly. We'll be having a report out soon. We're working with Turkey, we're working with Saudi Arabia. What happened is a terrible thing, assuming that happened. I mean, maybe we'll be pleasantly surprised, but somehow I tend to doubt it. And we take it very seriously.

Q Does the U.S. have any kind of responsibility to warn him if (inaudible) were picked up?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it's not our country. It's in Turkey, and it's not a citizen, as I understand it. But a thing like that shouldn't happen. It is a reporter with the Washington Post, and it's -- something like that should not be allowed to happen. Something like that should not happen. And we intend to get to the bottom of it.

Yes.

Q Mr. President, you have talked a little bit about the markets. The markets are down again, today. How long do you think this correction, which you said was coming anyway, is expected to last?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're still up 40 percent for the period of time. So, I mean, the markets are way up over what they were. It's a correction that I think is caused by the Federal Reserve with interest rates. The dollar has become very strong, which, frankly, people can debate whether or not they like a strong dollar or not.

The dollar is very strong, very powerful. And that causes a little difficulty with doing business, frankly. A strong dollar doesn't necessarily mean all good, but we do have a very strong dollar. And we have interest rates going up at a clip that's much faster than certainly a lot of people, including myself, would have anticipated.

I think the Fed is out of control. I think what they're doing it wrong. Under the Obama administration, you had a lot of help because they had very little interest. You know, when you talk about economies, our economy is far better than that. But we have actually -- we're paying interest. And they weren't. They were using funny money.

But I think the Fed is far too stringent, and they're making a mistake and it's not right.

And it's -- despite that, we're doing very well but it's not necessary, in my opinion. And I think I know about it better than they do. Believe me.

Q Would you consider firing the Fed Chairman? I mean, is his job secure?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I'm not going to fire him. I'm just disappointed at the clip. I think it's far too fast. Far too rigid, far too fast.

Q Mr. President, after what happened with the Soyuz capsule today, are you at all worried that American astronauts have to rely on the Russians to get into space? Because you've been talking about Space Force.

THE PRESIDENT: No, I'm not worried. We have a tremendous space program going right now, in addition to which you're going to have the Space Force. I think by next year we intend to have that. It's already in this budget. And we'll have our own everything. But no, I'm not at all. Not at all worried at all.

Q Will Jamal Khashoggi's case affect the way you deal with MBS or other Saudi officials?

THE PRESIDENT: We'll have to see what happens. A lot of work is being done on that, and we're going to have to see what happens. I don't like stopping massive amounts of money that's being poured into our country on -- I know they're talking about different kinds of sanctions, but they're spending \$110 billion on military equipment and on things that create jobs, like jobs and others, for this country.

I don't like the concept of stopping an investment of \$110 billion into the United States. Because you know what they're going to do? They're going to take that money and spend it in Russia or China, or someplace else. So I think there are other ways. If it turns out to be as bad as it might be, there are certainly other ways of handling the situation.

But I will tell you, upfront, right now, and I'll say it in front of senators: They're spending \$110 billion purchasing military equipment and other things. If we don't sell it to them, they'll say, "Well, thank you very much. We'll buy it from Russia." Or "Thank you very much. We'll buy it from China." That doesn't help us -- not when it comes to jobs and not when it comes to our companies losing out on that work.

But there are other things we can do. Let's find out what the problem is first. Okay?

Q You mean sanctions in that case? You oppose sanctions against Saudi Arabia?

THE PRESIDENT: I oppose -- I would not be in favor of stopping a country from spending \$110 billion -- which is an all-time record -- and letting Russia have that money and letting China have that money. Because all they're going to do is say, "That's okay. We don't have to buy it from Boeing. We don't have to buy it from Lockheed. We don't have to buy it from Raytheon and all these great companies. We'll buy it from Russia. We'll but it from China."

So what good does that do us? There are other things we can do.

Q Well, do you think they should pay a price if it turns out that the Saudis are responsible?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. There'll be something that has to take place. First, I want to find out what happened. And we're looking. Again, this took place in Turkey. And to the best of our knowledge, Khashoggi is not a United States citizen. Is that right? Or is that --

Q Permanent resident.

THE PRESIDENT: He's a permanent resident. Okay.

We don't like it, Jon. We don't like. And we don't like even a little bit. But as to whether or not we should stop \$110 billion from being spent in this country, knowing they have four or five alternatives, two very good alternatives -- that would not be acceptable to me.

Okay. But we're looking for the answer. And I think probably you'll have an answer sooner than people think.

Thank you very much. I'll see you in a little while.

Q We'll see you with Kanye later? Are you going to --

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. We're going to have you come in for Kanye for just a couple of seconds, okay?

Q Okay, great.

THE PRESIDENT: He'll be here and we're going to do a little -- you'll have a little fun. Okay?

Everybody asks about Kanye. You know, we have Kanye West and Jim Brown coming in. And everybody wants to know about --

Q (Inaudible) Jim Brown too.

THE PRESIDENT: I like Jim Brown. That Jim Brown is some running back. Hey, do you think the NFL would be paying him a couple of dollars nowadays?

What people don't know -- he might have been -- he was the greatest football player, perhaps. He may have been an even better lacrosse player. Did you know that? At Syracuse. He may have been an even better lacrosse player. And he's a great guy. And he's been with me for a long time. He's been a big supporter.

Thank you all very much. You'll come back in a little while.

END 11:45 A.M. EDT

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From: White House Press Office (b)(6)
on behalf of White House Press Office
Sent: Thursday, October 18, 2018 7:09 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: (b)(6) Remarks by President Trump Before Air Force One Departure

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release October 18, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
BEFORE AIR FORCE ONE DEPARTURE
Joint Base Andrews
Prince George's County, Maryland

3:54 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I'm going to Montana. We're doing a rally for Matt Rosendale, who's a fantastic man. And he's doing very well. And we will be talking some pretty tough things about Senator Tester, who has been a disaster, and a disaster, frankly, for Montana. So we'll see what happens there.

The economy is looking fantastic. Some great numbers come out and came out today. And I will see you folks on the plane, okay?

Q Mr. President, do you believe Jamal Khashoggi is dead?

THE PRESIDENT: It certainly looks that way to me. It's very sad. Certainly looks that way.

Q Can you comment on a shouting match between General Kelly and Ambassador Bolton in the West Wing today?

THE PRESIDENT: That, I had not heard about. No. That, I haven't.

Q Did you learn anything new from Secretary Pompeo today in your meeting?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Just that we're waiting for some investigations, and waiting for the results. And we'll have them very soon, and I think we'll be making a statement -- a very strong statement. But we're waiting for the results of about three different investigations, and we should be able to get to the bottom fairly soon.

And I'll see you on the plane.

Q Mr. President, what are you considering for possible consequences for Saudi, based on those --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it'll have to be very severe. I mean, it's bad, bad stuff. But we'll see what happens. Okay? Thank you. See you on the plane.

END 3:56 P.M. EDT

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From: White House Press Office (b)(6) on behalf of White House Press Office
Sent: Tuesday, November 20, 2018 8:48 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: (b)(6) Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure

[The White House]
Office of the Press Secretary
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 20, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
BEFORE MARINE ONE DEPARTURE

South Lawn

3:11 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: So we're going now to the southern White House. We have a lot of work we're going to be doing in Florida.

We had great -- some really great election results, as you know. Georgia just came in and that was a big success. Florida was a tremendous success with both the governor, Ron DeSantis -- he'll be a great governor -- and the senator, Rick Scott.

And, as you know, Ohio was a great victory. We had a lot of great victories, so we're very happy about that. We put out a statement on Saudi Arabia, which I guess most of you have seen, and we'll see how that all works out. It's a very complex situation. It's a shame, but it's -- it is what it is.

Q Mr. President, why are you siding with the Saudis over your own intelligence community?

THE PRESIDENT: Because it's "America First" for me. It's all about "America First." We're not going to give up hundreds of billions of dollars in orders, and let Russia, China, and everybody else have them. It's all about, for me -- very simple -- it's "America First."

Saudi Arabia -- if we broke with them, I think your oil prices would go through the roof. I've kept them down. They've helped me keep them down. Right now we have low oil prices, or relatively. I'd like to see it go down even lower -- lower.

But I think that it's a very simple equation for me. I'm about "Make America Great Again," and I'm about "America First."

Q Mr. President, are you basically -- are you basically telling us -- are you basically telling us, Mr. President, that human rights are too expensive?

THE PRESIDENT: That what?

Q That human rights are too expensive?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I'm not saying that at all. If you look at Iran -- just take a look at Iran -- and you look at what they're doing. They are a terrorist nation right now. Although I must tell you, they're a lot better right now than they were when I took office. When I took office, they were heading in a very, very bad direction.

And at some point, things very positive, frankly, could happen with Iran, but we also need a counterbalance. And Israel needs help also. If we abandon Saudi Arabia, it would be a terrible mistake.

Q Hezbollah is saying that they are (inaudible) government. Maybe it's a reply for the sanctions you placed on them --

THE PRESIDENT: I really can't understand what you're saying, sorry.

Q The Washington Post, in a statement -- put out a statement -- they said that you're putting your personal interests, your commercial interests ahead of national interests.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I have nothing to do with Saudi -- just so you understand, I don't make deals with Saudi Arabia. I don't have money from Saudi Arabia. I have nothing to do with Saudi Arabia. I couldn't care less.

And I will tell you, and as most of you know, being President has cost me a fortune, and that's okay with me. I knew that a long time ago. But being President has cost me a fortune -- a tremendous fortune like you've never seen before, but someday I'll tell you what that is.

But -- and I knew that a long time ago because I don't do deals. I don't do -- all I do is focus on this country and making great deals for this country. I don't focus on making great deals for myself because I don't care anymore.

So, Saudi Arabia has nothing to do with me. What does have to do with me is putting America first.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Wait, wait, wait, wait. They're buying hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of things from this country. If I say we don't want to take your business, if I say we're going to cut it off, they will get the equipment -- military equipment and other things -- from Russia and China.

Russia and China would be very, very happy because right now we're doing very well against China. We're doing very well against everybody, including Russia. And I'm going to keep it that way. And I'm not going to tell a country that is spending hundreds of billions of dollars and has helped me do one thing very importantly -- keep oil prices down so that they're not going to \$100 and \$150 dollars a barrel. Right now we have oil prices in great shape. I'm not going to destroy the world economy, and I'm not going to destroy the economy for our country by being foolish with Saudi Arabia.

So, I think the statement --

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Wait a minute. I think the statement was pretty obvious what I said. It's about "America First."

Q On Ivanka's emails --

THE PRESIDENT: Say it again.

Q On Ivanka's emails, why was it appropriate for your daughter to use personal email for government use?

THE PRESIDENT: Just so you understand, early on and for a little period of time, Ivanka did some emails. They weren't classified like Hillary Clinton. They weren't deleted like Hillary Clinton, who deleted 33- -- she wasn't hiring -- she wasn't doing anything to hide her emails.

I looked at it just very briefly today, and the presidential records -- they're all in presidential records. There was no hiding. There was no deleting like Hillary Clinton did. There was no servers in the basement like Hillary Clinton had. You're talking about a whole different -- you're talking about all fake news.

So what Ivanka did, it's all in the presidential records. Everything is there. There was no deletion. There was no nothing. What it is is a false story. Hillary Clinton deleted 33,000 emails. She had a server in the basement. That's the real story.

Q What is your reaction to the fact that your asylum policy has been put on hold?

THE PRESIDENT: The which policy?

Q Your asylum policy has been put on hold.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you go the 9th Circuit and it's a disgrace. And I'm going to put in a major complaint because you cannot win -- if you're us -- a case in the 9th Circuit and I think it's a disgrace.

When people file -- every case gets filed in the 9th Circuit because they know -- that's not law. That's not what this country stands for. Every case that gets filed in the 9th Circuit, we get beaten. And then we end up having to go to the Supreme Court, like the travel ban, and we won.

The 9th Circuit -- we're going to have to look at that. Because every case, no matter where it is, they file it -- practically, I mean practically -- for all intents and purposes -- they file it in what's called the 9th Circuit. This was an Obama judge. And I'll tell you what, it's not going to happen like this anymore.

Everybody that wants to sue the United States, they file their case in -- almost -- they file their case in the 9th Circuit. And it means an automatic loss no matter what you do, no matter how good your case is.

And the 9th Circuit is really something we have to take a look at because it's -- because it's not fair. People should not be allowed to immediately run to this very friendly circuit and file their case. And you people know better than anybody what's happening. It's a disgrace.

In my opinion, it's a disgrace what happens with the 9th Circuit. We will win that case in the Supreme Court of the United States.

Q Mr. President, did you give your written answers to Mueller yet, sir? Have you turned your written answers to Mueller yet?

Q Admiral McRaven, who oversaw that raid on Osama bin Laden -- is he a hero? And when will you visit the troops?

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead. What do you have?

Q Mr. President --

Q Will you answer when you will visit the troops?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't hear your question. I can't hear you.

Your voice is -- your voice is not --

Q Is Admiral McRaven -- is Admiral McRaven --

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know about Admiral -- I don't know Admiral McRaven.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Did you turn in the written answers to Robert Mueller yet?

THE PRESIDENT: No, they're all finished. The written answers are finished.

Q Have you -- did you turn them in?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. The lawyers have them. I don't know. They will. They will.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: The written answers to the witch hunt that's been going on forever -- no collusion, no nothing -- they've been finished. I finished them yesterday. The lawyers have them. I assume they'll turn them in today or soon.

Q Are you afraid to go to a warzone? Are you afraid to go to a warzone and visit American troops?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I'm going to a warzone. Yeah.

Q Mr. President, are you happy with the sanctions on Iran?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Are you happy with the sanctions on Iran?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, the sanctions on Iran are very strong, very powerful. They're sanctions, I think, that have had a tremendous impact. More sanctions are going on. We have a lot of tremendous support. And Iran is not the same country it was when I became President; it's a much different country. And hopefully, at some point, we'll be able to make a fair deal and help Iran and help the people of Iran.

Q Mr. President, what about the market today? Do you really believe the Dems are behind the market drop today?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I know that Schumer's daughter works for Facebook, which I just found out today. And if you look at what Facebook has been doing, you know, they have some real explaining to do -- how they're so Democrat-oriented. All of them.

But I hear Schumer's daughter works for Facebook. And I was very surprised and disappointed to learn that because nobody knew that until now.

Yeah, go ahead.

Q Do you think Julian Assange should go free? (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know anything about him. Really, I don't know much about him. I really don't.

Go ahead.

Q What do you want Pakistan to do --

THE PRESIDENT: Say it.

Q Do you want Pakistan to do in the fight against terrorism?

THE PRESIDENT: I want Pakistan to help us. We're no longer paying \$1.3 billion to Pakistan. We're paying them nothing because that's what they've done to help us -- nothing. And I cut those payments off a long time ago. We're not paying Pakistan any money because they're not helping us at all. And we'll see where it all goes.

I hope to have a good relationship with Pakistan, but right now we're paying Pakistan nothing. I cut them off. They were getting \$1.3 billion a year. They're not getting anything now.

Q Mr. President, what is your message to the U.S. troops that you deployed to the U.S.-Mexico border who aren't spending this Thanksgiving holiday with their families?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh you -- don't worry about the Thanksgiving -- these are tough people. They know what they're doing and they're great. And they've done a great job. You're so worried about the Thanksgiving holiday for them.

They are so proud to be representing our country on the border where -- if you look at what's happening, Mexico -- the people from Tijuana are saying, "Wow, these are tough people. They're fighting us." They're in fistfights all over the place. These are tough people that are coming in. Now I understand they have 500 people that have been designated as -- let's put it in a nice word -- criminals. And these are the people that are coming in? No. You don't have people coming in.

The order today is not -- we can get around that very easily. What I do say is, 9th Circuit is -- it's very unfair when everybody files their case in the 9th Circuit. They file it for a reason.

As far as the troops, they are proud to be on the border. They are proud to be defending our nation. And we're not letting people in. It's called "catch and detain." It's not called "catch and release," like it has been for many years. For many years, they called it "catch and release." They don't call it that anymore.

And our soldiers are doing an incredible job. And if you look at the walls that they're building, and if you look at all the barricades that they're putting up, they've done a great job.

Q Mr. President, do you have any reaction to Michael Avenatti being arrested for domestic violence?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I wish him the best of luck. I wish him the best of luck.

Q But what about the markets? Do you agree with Larry Kudlow that we're not headed to a recession?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I think we're doing great. I mean, as a country, we're doing great. Our unemployment is at a record low. You look at all of the different statistics. I think your tech stocks have some problems, but that'll come back.

But, no, I think we're going to do very well. I'd like to see the Fed with a lower interest rate. I think the rate is too high. I think we have much more of a Fed problem than we have a problem with anyone else.

We're doing very well with China. China wants to make a deal very badly. They might not say that to you, but they want to make it very badly. I have another 250 billion dollars' worth of tariffs to put on if we don't make a deal. And, believe me, I'll be putting them on because China has been ripping off our country for many, many years. And they don't rip us off with me.

We made a great deal with Canada. We made a great deal with Mexico. I appreciate the help that Mexico is giving us at the border. You see that people are not coming through. All of the fistfights and the fighting that you see are done on the Mexico side. They're not coming in here. But I appreciate what Mexico is doing. They can do more, but I appreciate what they're doing.

Q Mr. President, how can you say for sure that all of Ivanka's emails were preserved when she was using a private server and a private address?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, they were preserved. The lawyer told me they're all preserved -- historically, they're preserved.

Q Mr. President, what about the CIA assessment that the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia ordered the killing of Jamal Khashoggi? Don't you believe the CIA?

THE PRESIDENT: They didn't make a determination. And it's just like I said, I think it was (inaudible) -- maybe he did, maybe he didn't. They did not make that assessment. The CIA has looked at it. They've studied it a lot. They have nothing definitive.

And the fact is, maybe he did, maybe he didn't. If you look at Iran, what they've done -- they've been a bad actor. You look at what's happening in Syria with Assad, with hundreds of thousands of people killed. We are with Saudi Arabia. We're staying with Saudi Arabia.

And, by the way, just so everybody knows, I have no business whatsoever with Saudi Arabia. Couldn't care less.

Q Are you letting the Saudis get away with murder -- murdering a journalist?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. No, no. This is about "America first." They're paying us \$400 billion-plus to purchase and invest in our country. That's probably the biggest amount ever paid to the United States -- this is over a long period of time. It means hundreds of thousands of jobs, billions of dollars of investment and product.

And if you think I'm going to let Russia have that money or -- or those -- or those things; if you think I'm going to let China make the military equipment -- hey, China and Russia would love to make 100 billion dollars' worth of military equipment from Saudi Arabia. We have the contracts. They wanted those contracts. That would be a big, fat, beautiful gift to Russia and to China. They're not going to get that gift.

Just so you understand, it's about "Make America Great Again." It's about "America First." We're going to stay with Saudi Arabia.

The other thing: Saudi Arabia is probably the second-biggest oil producer. They've worked with us very well. We've kept oil prices down. If you want to see oil prices go to \$150 a barrel -- like, by the way, Russia would love to see that -- all you have to do is break up our relationship with Saudi Arabia.

Q Will you meet with the Saudi Crown Prince in Argentina next weekend?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Will you meet with the Saudi Crown Prince in Argentina?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know that he's going to be there. But if he is, I would.

Q Cindy Hyde-Smith -- are you concerned about her situation?

THE PRESIDENT: No, Cindy Hyde-Smith is a spectacular woman. She's a great senator. She came in, she's done a fantastic job in a short period of time. She made a statement which I know that she feels very badly about it, and it was just sort of said in jest, as she said. And she's a tremendous woman. And it's a shame that she has to go through this.

I think she's going to do very well. I really believe she's going to do very well. I've gotten to know her well. She's a person that loves the people of Mississippi, she loves the people of this country. She's going to be a great senator.

I'm going to do two events in Mississippi on Monday. I'm doing one near -- let's see, I'm doing one near Jackson. I'm doing one in the Gulf Coast. And we're going to do one in Tupelo. So we might even do three, but we're going to do two.

I think Tupelo probably is definite, and I think Gulfport is definite. Cindy -- Cindy Hyde-Smith is a tremendous woman who truly loves the people of Mississippi and our country, and I think she's going to win, very big.

Q Why would you ever let Ivanka be interviewed with Democrats about her email?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, Ivanka can handle herself. Ivanka can handle herself. These are all in the historical records. There was no deletion whatsoever, unlike Hillary Clinton, who deleted 33,000 emails; unlike Hillary Clinton, who had a server in the basement. Ivanka didn't. This was just early on, when she came in. These calls were not classified, unlike Hillary Clinton's calls, which were classified. And it's all fake news.

Q Holiday pardons? Any holiday pardons?

THE PRESIDENT: I love the pardons for the turkey.

Q Are you going to pardon any people?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't thought of it, but it's not a bad thing.

Q Will you pardon Assad? Will you pardon Assad? (Inaudible.) Why are you (inaudible) the petition?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I think what Assad has done is horrible. I mean, really horrible.

Q A question about the recently released Time Magazine online poll. Who do you feel -- obviously, I can assume who you think deserves to be first place. Who do you think deserves to be second place as Time's Person of the Year?

THE PRESIDENT: It's called "Person of the Year," right?

Q Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: It's no longer "Man of the Year," right?

Q Yeah. Their language.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. That's up to Time Magazine. I've been there before. I can't imagine anybody else other than Trump. Can you imagine anybody other than Trump? Huh?

Have a good time, everybody. Thank you.

(Inaudible.) This country has to get back together today. You saw the polls that came out. The polls are negative now on it. It's just a disgrace. Honestly, it's a disgrace (inaudible).

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Is it good or bad?

Q It's great. (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: He's doing a very good job. Everybody tells me that Matt Whitaker is doing a fantastic job. So, you know, we'll have to see where everything goes. But everybody tells me he's doing a fantastic job.

Q (Inaudible) calling to investigate Ivanka's emails. What do you say, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: What else?

Thank you, everybody.

END 3:33 P.M. EST

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The White House · 1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW · Washington, DC 20500-0003 · USA · 202-456-1111

From: White House Press Office (b)(6) on behalf of White House Press Office
Sent: Tuesday, November 20, 2018 8:48 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure

[The White House]
Office of the Press Secretary
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 20, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
BEFORE MARINE ONE DEPARTURE

South Lawn

3:11 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: So we're going now to the southern White House. We have a lot of work we're going to be doing in Florida.

We had great -- some really great election results, as you know. Georgia just came in and that was a big success. Florida was a tremendous success with both the governor, Ron DeSantis -- he'll be a great governor -- and the senator, Rick Scott.

And, as you know, Ohio was a great victory. We had a lot of great victories, so we're very happy about that. We put out a statement on Saudi Arabia, which I guess most of you have seen, and we'll see how that all works out. It's a very complex situation. It's a shame, but it's -- it is what it is.

Q Mr. President, why are you siding with the Saudis over your own intelligence community?

THE PRESIDENT: Because it's "America First" for me. It's all about "America First." We're not going to give up hundreds of billions of dollars in orders, and let Russia, China, and everybody else have them. It's all about, for me -- very simple -- it's "America First."

Saudi Arabia -- if we broke with them, I think your oil prices would go through the roof. I've kept them down. They've helped me keep them down. Right now we have low oil prices, or relatively. I'd like to see it go down even lower -- lower.

But I think that it's a very simple equation for me. I'm about "Make America Great Again," and I'm about "America First."

Q Mr. President, are you basically -- are you basically telling us -- are you basically telling us, Mr. President, that human rights are too expensive?

THE PRESIDENT: That what?

Q That human rights are too expensive?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I'm not saying that at all. If you look at Iran -- just take a look at Iran -- and you look at what they're doing. They are a terrorist nation right now. Although I must tell you, they're a lot better right now than they were when I took office. When I took office, they were heading in a very, very bad direction.

And at some point, things very positive, frankly, could happen with Iran, but we also need a counterbalance. And Israel needs help also. If we abandon Saudi Arabia, it would be a terrible mistake.

Q Hezbollah is saying that they are (inaudible) government. Maybe it's a reply for the sanctions you placed on them --

THE PRESIDENT: I really can't understand what you're saying, sorry.

Q The Washington Post, in a statement -- put out a statement -- they said that you're putting your personal interests, your commercial interests ahead of national interests.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I have nothing to do with Saudi -- just so you understand, I don't make deals with Saudi Arabia. I don't have money from Saudi Arabia. I have nothing to do with Saudi Arabia. I couldn't care less.

And I will tell you, and as most of you know, being President has cost me a fortune, and that's okay with me. I knew that a long time ago. But being President has cost me a fortune -- a tremendous fortune like you've never seen before, but someday I'll tell you what that is.

But -- and I knew that a long time ago because I don't do deals. I don't do -- all I do is focus on this country and making great deals for this country. I don't focus on making great deals for myself because I don't care anymore.

So, Saudi Arabia has nothing to do with me. What does have to do with me is putting America first.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Wait, wait, wait, wait. They're buying hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of things from this country. If I say we don't want to take your business, if I say we're going to cut it off, they will get the equipment -- military equipment and other things -- from Russia and China.

Russia and China would be very, very happy because right now we're doing very well against China. We're doing very well against everybody, including Russia. And I'm going to keep it that way. And I'm not going to tell a country that is spending hundreds of billions of dollars and has helped me do one thing very importantly -- keep oil prices down so that they're not going to \$100 and \$150 dollars a barrel. Right now we have oil prices in great shape. I'm not going to destroy the world economy, and I'm not going to destroy the economy for our country by being foolish with Saudi Arabia.

So, I think the statement --

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Wait a minute. I think the statement was pretty obvious what I said. It's about "America First."

Q On Ivanka's emails --

THE PRESIDENT: Say it again.

Q On Ivanka's emails, why was it appropriate for your daughter to use personal email for government use?

THE PRESIDENT: Just so you understand, early on and for a little period of time, Ivanka did some emails. They weren't classified like Hillary Clinton. They weren't deleted like Hillary Clinton, who deleted 33- -- she wasn't hiring -- she wasn't doing anything to hide her emails.

I looked at it just very briefly today, and the presidential records -- they're all in presidential records. There was no hiding. There was no deleting like Hillary Clinton did. There was no servers in the basement like Hillary Clinton had. You're talking about a whole different -- you're talking about all fake news.

So what Ivanka did, it's all in the presidential records. Everything is there. There was no deletion. There was no nothing. What it is is a false story. Hillary Clinton deleted 33,000 emails. She had a server in the basement. That's the real story.

Q What is your reaction to the fact that your asylum policy has been put on hold?

THE PRESIDENT: The which policy?

Q Your asylum policy has been put on hold.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you go the 9th Circuit and it's a disgrace. And I'm going to put in a major complaint because you cannot win -- if you're us -- a case in the 9th Circuit and I think it's a disgrace.

When people file -- every case gets filed in the 9th Circuit because they know -- that's not law. That's not what this country stands for. Every case that gets filed in the 9th Circuit, we get beaten. And then we end up having to go to the Supreme Court, like the travel ban, and we won.

The 9th Circuit -- we're going to have to look at that. Because every case, no matter where it is, they file it -- practically, I mean practically -- for all intents and purposes -- they file it in what's called the 9th Circuit. This was an Obama judge. And I'll tell you what, it's not going to happen like this anymore.

Everybody that wants to sue the United States, they file their case in -- almost -- they file their case in the 9th Circuit. And it means an automatic loss no matter what you do, no matter how good your case is.

And the 9th Circuit is really something we have to take a look at because it's -- because it's not fair. People should not be allowed to immediately run to this very friendly circuit and file their case. And you people know better than anybody what's happening. It's a disgrace.

In my opinion, it's a disgrace what happens with the 9th Circuit. We will win that case in the Supreme Court of the United States.

Q Mr. President, did you give your written answers to Mueller yet, sir? Have you turned your written answers to Mueller yet?

Q Admiral McRaven, who oversaw that raid on Osama bin Laden -- is he a hero? And when will you visit the troops?

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead. What do you have?

Q Mr. President --

Q Will you answer when you will visit the troops?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't hear your question. I can't hear you.

Your voice is -- your voice is not --

Q Is Admiral McRaven -- is Admiral McRaven --

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know about Admiral -- I don't know Admiral McRaven.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Did you turn in the written answers to Robert Mueller yet?

THE PRESIDENT: No, they're all finished. The written answers are finished.

Q Have you -- did you turn them in?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. The lawyers have them. I don't know. They will. They will.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: The written answers to the witch hunt that's been going on forever -- no collusion, no nothing -- they've been finished. I finished them yesterday. The lawyers have them. I assume they'll turn them in today or soon.

Q Are you afraid to go to a warzone? Are you afraid to go to a warzone and visit American troops?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I'm going to a warzone. Yeah.

Q Mr. President, are you happy with the sanctions on Iran?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Are you happy with the sanctions on Iran?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, the sanctions on Iran are very strong, very powerful. They're sanctions, I think, that have had a tremendous impact. More sanctions are going on. We have a lot of tremendous support. And Iran is not the same country it was when I became President; it's a much different country. And hopefully, at some point, we'll be able to make a fair deal and help Iran and help the people of Iran.

Q Mr. President, what about the market today? Do you really believe the Dems are behind the market drop today?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I know that Schumer's daughter works for Facebook, which I just found out today. And if you look at what Facebook has been doing, you know, they have some real explaining to do -- how they're so Democrat-oriented. All of them.

But I hear Schumer's daughter works for Facebook. And I was very surprised and disappointed to learn that because nobody knew that until now.

Yeah, go ahead.

Q Do you think Julian Assange should go free? (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know anything about him. Really, I don't know much about him. I really don't.

Go ahead.

Q What do you want Pakistan to do --

THE PRESIDENT: Say it.

Q Do you want Pakistan to do in the fight against terrorism?

THE PRESIDENT: I want Pakistan to help us. We're no longer paying \$1.3 billion to Pakistan. We're paying them nothing because that's what they've done to help us -- nothing. And I cut those payments off a long time ago. We're not paying Pakistan any money because they're not helping us at all. And we'll see where it all goes.

I hope to have a good relationship with Pakistan, but right now we're paying Pakistan nothing. I cut them off. They were getting \$1.3 billion a year. They're not getting anything now.

Q Mr. President, what is your message to the U.S. troops that you deployed to the U.S.-Mexico border who aren't spending this Thanksgiving holiday with their families?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh you -- don't worry about the Thanksgiving -- these are tough people. They know what they're doing and they're great. And they've done a great job. You're so worried about the Thanksgiving holiday for them.

They are so proud to be representing our country on the border where -- if you look at what's happening, Mexico -- the people from Tijuana are saying, "Wow, these are tough people. They're fighting us." They're in fistfights all over the place. These are tough people that are coming in. Now I understand they have 500 people that have been designated as -- let's put it in a nice word -- criminals. And these are the people that are coming in? No. You don't have people coming in.

The order today is not -- we can get around that very easily. What I do say is, 9th Circuit is -- it's very unfair when everybody files their case in the 9th Circuit. They file it for a reason.

As far as the troops, they are proud to be on the border. They are proud to be defending our nation. And we're not letting people in. It's called "catch and detain." It's not called "catch and release," like it has been for many years. For many years, they called it "catch and release." They don't call it that anymore.

And our soldiers are doing an incredible job. And if you look at the walls that they're building, and if you look at all the barricades that they're putting up, they've done a great job.

Q Mr. President, do you have any reaction to Michael Avenatti being arrested for domestic violence?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I wish him the best of luck. I wish him the best of luck.

Q But what about the markets? Do you agree with Larry Kudlow that we're not headed to a recession?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I think we're doing great. I mean, as a country, we're doing great. Our unemployment is at a record low. You look at all of the different statistics. I think your tech stocks have some problems, but that'll come back.

But, no, I think we're going to do very well. I'd like to see the Fed with a lower interest rate. I think the rate is too high. I think we have much more of a Fed problem than we have a problem with anyone else.

We're doing very well with China. China wants to make a deal very badly. They might not say that to you, but they want to make it very badly. I have another 250 billion dollars' worth of tariffs to put on if we don't make a deal. And, believe me, I'll be putting them on because China has been ripping off our country for many, many years. And they don't rip us off with me.

We made a great deal with Canada. We made a great deal with Mexico. I appreciate the help that Mexico is giving us at the border. You see that people are not coming through. All of the fistfights and the fighting that you see are done on the Mexico side. They're not coming in here. But I appreciate what Mexico is doing. They can do more, but I appreciate what they're doing.

Q Mr. President, how can you say for sure that all of Ivanka's emails were preserved when she was using a private server and a private address?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, they were preserved. The lawyer told me they're all preserved -- historically, they're preserved.

Q Mr. President, what about the CIA assessment that the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia ordered the killing of Jamal Khashoggi? Don't you believe the CIA?

THE PRESIDENT: They didn't make a determination. And it's just like I said, I think it was (inaudible) -- maybe he did, maybe he didn't. They did not make that assessment. The CIA has looked at it. They've studied it a lot. They have nothing definitive.

And the fact is, maybe he did, maybe he didn't. If you look at Iran, what they've done -- they've been a bad actor. You look at what's happening in Syria with Assad, with hundreds of thousands of people killed. We are with Saudi Arabia. We're staying with Saudi Arabia.

And, by the way, just so everybody knows, I have no business whatsoever with Saudi Arabia. Couldn't care less.

Q Are you letting the Saudis get away with murder -- murdering a journalist?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. No, no. This is about "America first." They're paying us \$400 billion-plus to purchase and invest in our country. That's probably the biggest amount ever paid to the United States -- this is over a long period of time. It means hundreds of thousands of jobs, billions of dollars of investment and product.

And if you think I'm going to let Russia have that money or -- or those -- or those things; if you think I'm going to let China make the military equipment -- hey, China and Russia would love to make 100 billion dollars' worth of military equipment from Saudi Arabia. We have the contracts. They wanted those contracts. That would be a big, fat, beautiful gift to Russia and to China. They're not going to get that gift.

Just so you understand, it's about "Make America Great Again." It's about "America First." We're going to stay with Saudi Arabia.

The other thing: Saudi Arabia is probably the second-biggest oil producer. They've worked with us very well. We've kept oil prices down. If you want to see oil prices go to \$150 a barrel -- like, by the way, Russia would love to see that -- all you have to do is break up our relationship with Saudi Arabia.

Q Will you meet with the Saudi Crown Prince in Argentina next weekend?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Will you meet with the Saudi Crown Prince in Argentina?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know that he's going to be there. But if he is, I would.

Q Cindy Hyde-Smith -- are you concerned about her situation?

THE PRESIDENT: No, Cindy Hyde-Smith is a spectacular woman. She's a great senator. She came in, she's done a fantastic job in a short period of time. She made a statement which I know that she feels very badly about it, and it was just sort of said in jest, as she said. And she's a tremendous woman. And it's a shame that she has to go through this.

I think she's going to do very well. I really believe she's going to do very well. I've gotten to know her well. She's a person that loves the people of Mississippi, she loves the people of this country. She's going to be a great senator.

I'm going to do two events in Mississippi on Monday. I'm doing one near -- let's see, I'm doing one near Jackson. I'm doing one in the Gulf Coast. And we're going to do one in Tupelo. So we might even do three, but we're going to do two.

I think Tupelo probably is definite, and I think Gulfport is definite. Cindy -- Cindy Hyde-Smith is a tremendous woman who truly loves the people of Mississippi and our country, and I think she's going to win, very big.

Q Why would you ever let Ivanka be interviewed with Democrats about her email?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, Ivanka can handle herself. Ivanka can handle herself. These are all in the historical records. There was no deletion whatsoever, unlike Hillary Clinton, who deleted 33,000 emails; unlike Hillary Clinton, who had a server in the basement. Ivanka didn't. This was just early on, when she came in. These calls were not classified, unlike Hillary Clinton's calls, which were classified. And it's all fake news.

Q Holiday pardons? Any holiday pardons?

THE PRESIDENT: I love the pardons for the turkey.

Q Are you going to pardon any people?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't thought of it, but it's not a bad thing.

Q Will you pardon Assad? Will you pardon Assad? (Inaudible.) Why are you (inaudible) the petition?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I think what Assad has done is horrible. I mean, really horrible.

Q A question about the recently released Time Magazine online poll. Who do you feel -- obviously, I can assume who you think deserves to be first place. Who do you think deserves to be second place as Time's Person of the Year?

THE PRESIDENT: It's called "Person of the Year," right?

Q Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: It's no longer "Man of the Year," right?

Q Yeah. Their language.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. That's up to Time Magazine. I've been there before. I can't imagine anybody else other than Trump. Can you imagine anybody other than Trump? Huh?

Have a good time, everybody. Thank you.

(Inaudible.) This country has to get back together today. You saw the polls that came out. The polls are negative now on it. It's just a disgrace. Honestly, it's a disgrace (inaudible).

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Is it good or bad?

Q It's great. (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: He's doing a very good job. Everybody tells me that Matt Whitaker is doing a fantastic job. So, you know, we'll have to see where everything goes. But everybody tells me he's doing a fantastic job.

Q (Inaudible) calling to investigate Ivanka's emails. What do you say, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: What else?

Thank you, everybody.

END 3:33 P.M. EST

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From: White House Press Office (b)(6) on behalf of White House Press Office
Sent: Wednesday, October 31, 2018 7:17 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: (b)(6) Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure

[The White House]
Office of the Press Secretary
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 31, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
BEFORE MARINE ONE DEPARTURE

South Lawn

3:46 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: So I'm going to one of my favorite places in the world -- Florida -- to speak on behalf of, hopefully, Governor DeSantis who's running a very good campaign. They've got it going now. And also, as you know, Rick Scott, who's been a great governor and hopefully he'll be your new senator.

I'm going to Florida. We'll spend a lot of time. We're going to make a speech tonight, or a rally. And we have a tremendous crowd. We have a lot of people. Whatever it is, it's packed.

So I look forward to being in Florida. And I guess some of you are going with us and some of your aren't. But if you're not, we'll be missing you.

It seems that the campaign is going very well. It looks like we're doing very, very well in the Senate. A lot of seats that were not really being thought of in terms of victories a year ago now are looking like they could very well be victories. And the House is -- a lot of people. I mean, there are a lot of people. And I think we're going to do well in the House, also. But I know we're doing well in the Senate, and it looks like we're doing okay in the House. We're going to have to see. There's just so many people.

Q Mr. President, why are you attacking Paul Ryan?

THE PRESIDENT: Birthright citizenship is a very, very important subject. In my opinion, it's much less complex than people think. I think it says it very loud and clear in the Constitution that you don't have to go through the process of whatever they're talking about. And, by the way, this is not a Constitutional amendment. You don't need a Constitutional amendment for birthright citizenship.

Q Who told you that?

THE PRESIDENT: I believe that you can have a simple vote in Congress, or it's even possible, in my opinion -- this is after meeting with some very talented legal scholars -- that you can do it through an executive order. Now, I'd rather do it through Congress, because that's permanent. But we can certainly do it through -- I really believe we can do it through executive order.

One other thing: If President Obama can get DACA approved, if you look at DACA -- where he actually said, "Well, this isn't legal, or this I can't do, but I'll do it anyway," and then he gets a judge to approve it -- and it will ultimately be decided by the Supreme Court, I hope quickly -- but certainly if he can do DACA, we can do this by executive order.

With that being said, I think Congress will ultimately act, but I may very well do it by executive order. Just so you understand: A person comes in, was never in our country before, has a baby, and now, all of a sudden, the baby is a United States citizen. And through chain migration and other things, many other people come in, through the baby. It's ridiculous.

All you have to do is take a look at what Harry Reid said in 1993. And guess what? Before he went insane, he got it right.

Q Are you going to blame Paul Ryan if Republicans don't hold the House?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I'm not going to blame anybody. I think we're doing well with the House. We're going to have to see. It's a lot of people. I campaigned for a lot of candidates that were down a little bit, and now they're up. But we're going to see. I think we're going to do well in the House, and I think we're doing, really, extraordinarily well in the Senate.

Q Have you received a subpoena at all from Robert Mueller? Have you been subpoenaed at all?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q (Inaudible) do you believe that the Saudis have betrayed you? And what do you plan to --

THE PRESIDENT: Say it again. What?

Q Do you believe that the Saudis have betrayed you on Khashoggi? And do you plan to use that as leverage --

THE PRESIDENT: Not betrayed me, no. I just hope that it all works out. We have a lot of facts. We have a lot of things that we've been looking at. They haven't betrayed me. I mean, maybe they betrayed themselves. We'll have to see how it all turns out.

Q Mr. President, what do you say to your critics who say you're fearmongering on immigration?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I'm not fearmongering at all. Immigration is a very important subject. The Democrats have let immigration in our country get out of control with their horrible, not allowing us to have any votes to get passage. We need Democrat votes to change the immigration laws. They haven't given us any votes. And I actually think that they will.

As far as the caravan, which is very dangerous -- you see what's been happening -- as far as the caravan is concerned, our military is out. We have about 5,800. We'll go up anywhere between 10,000 and 15,000 military personnel, on top of Border Patrol, ICE, and everybody else at the border.

Nobody is coming in. We're not allowing people to come in. If you look at what happened in Mexico two days ago, with the roughness of these people in the second caravan that's been forming, and also, frankly, in the first caravan, and now they have one forming in El Salvador -- and we are thinking very seriously immediately stopping aid to those countries. Because, frankly, they're doing nothing for the American people. Immigration is a very, very big and very dangerous -- a really dangerous topic, and we're not going to allow people to come into our country that don't have the wellbeing of our country in mind.

Q (Inaudible) a thousand miles away. How (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, they'll be here fast. They're trying to get up any way they can. They're trying to get up by train. They're trying to get up by truck and by buses. We're going to be prepared. They're not coming into our country. And one other thing important: We're not doing any releases anymore. We're not going to release and let them never come back to trial.

We'll build 10 cities. We'll build whatever we have to build, in terms of housing. But we're not doing releases. What's been happening over years is they would come in, release them, and they'd never show up for their trial. And we now have 25 or 30 million people in this country illegally because of what's been happening over many years.

So we're not going to allow it. It's dangerous. And it's very unfair to our citizens. With that being said, I want people to come into our country, but they have to come in legally and they have to come through merit -- a merit system. Because we have many companies -- as you know, car companies, Foxconn, that does the Apple computers and iPhones -- we have many, many companies coming into our country. We need people. We want them to come in but we want them to come in through merit, and we want them to come in legally.

Q Do you think somebody is funding the caravan? Do you think somebody is paying for the caravan?

THE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't be surprised. I wouldn't be surprised.

Q George Soros? Who's paying for it?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know who. But I wouldn't be surprised. A lot of people say yes.

Q Have you heard from Kanye West lately?

THE PRESIDENT: We get along great. He's a good guy.

Q Are you worried that this will cost you the suburban districts?

THE PRESIDENT: Say it?

Q Are you worried that this will cost you the suburban districts?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't think so. Whatever it is -- here's the thing: I don't view suburban districts or any other districts. I view the country. Our country has to be safe.

And, by the way, women -- we're doing very well with the women vote because they want security, they want safety. They don't want these people pouring into our country totally unchecked. And when you look at what happened to the Mexican police, and you look at what happened two days ago to the Mexican military, it's a dangerous group of people. They're not coming into our country. Thank you.

We'll see you in Florida.

END 3:54 P.M. EDT

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THE PRESIDENT: So I'm going to one of my favorite places in the world -- Florida -- to speak on behalf of, hopefully, Governor DeSantis who's running a very good campaign. They've got it going now. And also, as you know, Rick Scott, who's been a great governor and hopefully he'll be your new senator.

I'm going to Florida. We'll spend a lot of time. We're going to make a speech tonight, or a rally. And we have a tremendous crowd. We have a lot of people. Whatever it is, it's packed.

So I look forward to being in Florida. And I guess some of you are going with us and some of your aren't. But if you're not, we'll be missing you.

It seems that the campaign is going very well. It looks like we're doing very, very well in the Senate. A lot of seats that were not really being thought of in terms of victories a year ago now are looking like they could very well be victories. And the House is -- a lot of people. I mean, there are a lot of people. And I think we're going to do well in the House, also. But I know we're doing well in the Senate, and it looks like we're doing okay in the House. We're going to have to see. There's just so many people.

Q Mr. President, why are you attacking Paul Ryan?

THE PRESIDENT: Birthright citizenship is a very, very important subject. In my opinion, it's much less complex than people think. I think it says it very loud and clear in the Constitution that you don't have to go through the process of whatever they're talking about. And, by the way, this is not a Constitutional amendment. You don't need a Constitutional amendment for birthright citizenship.

Q Who told you that?

THE PRESIDENT: I believe that you can have a simple vote in Congress, or it's even possible, in my opinion -- this is after meeting with some very talented legal scholars -- that you can do it through an executive order. Now, I'd rather do it through Congress, because that's permanent. But we can certainly do it through -- I really believe we can do it through executive order.

One other thing: If President Obama can get DACA approved, if you look at DACA -- where he actually said, "Well, this isn't legal, or this I can't do, but I'll do it anyway," and then he gets a judge to approve it -- and it will ultimately be decided by the Supreme Court, I hope quickly -- but certainly if he can do DACA, we can do this by executive order.

With that being said, I think Congress will ultimately act, but I may very well do it by executive order. Just so you understand: A person comes in, was never in our country before, has a baby, and now, all of a sudden, the baby is a United States citizen. And through chain migration and other things, many other people come in, through the baby. It's ridiculous.

All you have to do is take a look at what Harry Reid said in 1993. And guess what? Before he went insane, he got it right.

Q Are you going to blame Paul Ryan if Republicans don't hold the House?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I'm not going to blame anybody. I think we're doing well with the House. We're going to have to see. It's a lot of people. I campaigned for a lot of candidates that were down a little bit, and now they're up. But we're going to see. I think we're going to do well in the House, and I think we're doing, really, extraordinarily well in the Senate.

Q Have you received a subpoena at all from Robert Mueller? Have you been subpoenaed at all?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q (Inaudible) do you believe that the Saudis have betrayed you? And what do you plan to --

THE PRESIDENT: Say it again. What?

Q Do you believe that the Saudis have betrayed you on Khashoggi? And do you plan to use that as leverage --

THE PRESIDENT: Not betrayed me, no. I just hope that it all works out. We have a lot of facts. We have a lot of things that we've been looking at. They haven't betrayed me. I mean, maybe they betrayed themselves. We'll have to see how it all turns out.

Q Mr. President, what do you say to your critics who say you're fearmongering on immigration?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I'm not fearmongering at all. Immigration is a very important subject. The Democrats have let immigration in our country get out of control with their horrible, not allowing us to have any votes to get passage. We need Democrat votes to change the immigration laws. They haven't given us any votes. And I actually think that they will.

As far as the caravan, which is very dangerous -- you see what's been happening -- as far as the caravan is concerned, our military is out. We have about 5,800. We'll go up anywhere between 10,000 and 15,000 military personnel, on top of Border Patrol, ICE, and everybody else at the border.

Nobody is coming in. We're not allowing people to come in. If you look at what happened in Mexico two days ago, with the roughness of these people in the second caravan that's been forming, and also, frankly, in the first caravan, and now they have one forming in El Salvador -- and we are thinking very seriously immediately stopping aid to those countries. Because, frankly, they're doing nothing for the American people. Immigration is a very, very big and very dangerous -- a really dangerous topic, and we're not going to allow people to come into our country that don't have the wellbeing of our country in mind.

Q (Inaudible) a thousand miles away. How (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, they'll be here fast. They're trying to get up any way they can. They're trying to get up by train. They're trying to get up by truck and by buses. We're going to be prepared. They're not coming into our country. And one other thing important: We're not doing any releases anymore. We're not going to release and let them never come back to trial.

We'll build 10 cities. We'll build whatever we have to build, in terms of housing. But we're not doing releases. What's been happening over years is they would come in, release them, and they'd never show up for their trial. And we now have 25 or 30 million people in this country illegally because of what's been happening over many years.

So we're not going to allow it. It's dangerous. And it's very unfair to our citizens. With that being said, I want people to come into our country, but they have to come in legally and they have to come through merit -- a merit system. Because we have many companies -- as you know, car companies, Foxconn, that does the Apple computers and iPhones -- we have many, many companies coming into our country. We need people. We want them to come in but we want them to come in through merit, and we want them to come in legally.

Q Do you think somebody is funding the caravan? Do you think somebody is paying for the caravan?

THE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't be surprised. I wouldn't be surprised.

Q George Soros? Who's paying for it?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know who. But I wouldn't be surprised. A lot of people say yes.

Q Have you heard from Kanye West lately?

THE PRESIDENT: We get along great. He's a good guy.

Q Are you worried that this will cost you the suburban districts?

THE PRESIDENT: Say it?

Q Are you worried that this will cost you the suburban districts?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't think so. Whatever it is -- here's the thing: I don't view suburban districts or any other districts. I view the country. Our country has to be safe.

And, by the way, women -- we're doing very well with the women vote because they want security, they want safety. They don't want these people pouring into our country totally unchecked. And when you look at what happened to the Mexican police, and you look at what happened two days ago to the Mexican military, it's a dangerous group of people. They're not coming into our country. Thank you.

We'll see you in Florida.

END 3:54 P.M. EDT

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From: White House Press Office (b)(6)
on behalf of White House Press Office
Sent: Monday, October 22, 2018 5:07 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release October 22, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
BEFORE MARINE ONE DEPARTURE

South Lawn

2:45 P.M. EDT

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you're going to have to see that. I have reports. And they have a lot of everybody in that group. It's a horrible thing. And it's a lot bigger than 5,000 people. And we got to stop them at the border.

And unfortunately, if you look at the countries, they have not done their job. Unfortunately, they have not done their job.

Q Have you spoken to the leaders of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador about --

THE PRESIDENT: Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador -- they're paid a lot of money. Every year, we give them foreign aid. And they did nothing for us. Nothing. They did nothing for us.

So we give them tremendous amounts of money. You know what it is; you cover it all the time: hundreds of millions of dollars. They, like a lot of others, do nothing for our country.

Q Have you spoken to the leaders, Mr. President?

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: I have. I spoke to the Crown Prince. We have people over in Saudi Arabia now. We have top intelligence people in Turkey. And we're going to see what we have. I'll know a lot tomorrow. They'll be coming back either tonight or tomorrow morning. But we have people in Saudi Arabia and people in Turkey.

Q (Inaudible) a month (inaudible) investigation, will you give them --

THE PRESIDENT: I think that's a long time. You said they want a month?

Q They want one month.

THE PRESIDENT: That's a long time. There's no reason for that much. Be faster.

Q What about your promise to protect transgender Americans? Are you giving up on that?

THE PRESIDENT: We're looking at it. We have a lot of different concepts right now. They have a lot of different things happening with respect to transgender right now. You know that as well as I do. And we're looking at it very seriously.

Q But what about your promise to protect the LGBTQ community?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm protecting everybody.

Q Transgender Americans say you've given up on them.

THE PRESIDENT: You know what I'm doing? I'm protecting everybody. I want to protect our country.

Q Mr. President, you're headed to Texas. Why hasn't Ted Cruz put this race away already?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I think he has. I think it's going to be. I think they wanted to see that I'm on his side, and I am, 100 percent. We have -- I mean, you people have been reporting -- over 100,000 people. They lined up two days ago, and it's very exciting.

Q But they're there to see you. Why does Ted Cruz need your help?

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THE PRESIDENT: I think Beto O'Rourke is highly overrated. When I heard about him, I figured he must be something a little special. He's not. I thought he got beaten badly in the debates. I think he's a highly overrated guy.

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No, we've very close. We've done great on tax cuts. We've done great on regulation cuts. No, he's been really terrific.

And if you look at what's happening in Germany, with respect to the pipeline, they want to now start buying our natural gas. It just came out. So take a look at that.

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THE PRESIDENT: To me, he's not "Lyin' Ted" anymore. He's "Beautiful Ted."

Q Beautiful Ted?

THE PRESIDENT: He's Texas -- I call him "Texas Ted." No, Ted Cruz and I had a very, very nasty and tough campaign. It was a very competitive -- it was a very tough campaign. Once it ended and we got together -- and, by the way, very late into the campaign we lasted. People were shocked. I said, "Don't worry, it's only a question of time."

And then ultimately, what happened, we fought it out. The outcome was obvious. And we have worked together very closely. I like him a lot. I actually like him a lot. And he's a very smart guy. He loves the people of Texas -- which I do. And, in fact, right now, I guess they said they've never seen it. It's like a big tailgate. It goes on for miles; it's over 100,000 people.

Q What do you think about Nellie Ohr taking marital protective status before Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: I think Nellie Ohr is a disgrace, and I think her husband is not much better. Maybe he's worse. I think Nellie Ohr is a disgrace, taking marital protection so she doesn't have to talk about corruption. I think she's a disgrace.

Q (Inaudible) Central America. Won't that cause (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: Hey, look, I can't tell you. I can only tell you this: We give them hundreds of millions of dollars. They do nothing for us.

Q How will cutting aid provide (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: You know what? Maybe it will and maybe it won't. But it certainly hasn't affected. They can do a lot better job. If you look at the three countries in particular -- and I don't know what's going on with Mexico. I guess it looks like the people are walking right through the middle of Mexico, so I'm not exactly thrilled there either.

Q Do you believe what the Saudis have said about Khashoggi now? Are they telling the truth now?

THE PRESIDENT: You know what, Jon, I'm going to know very shortly, because I have a great group people in Turkey right now and a great group of people in Saudi Arabia. We will know very soon. We have tremendously talented people that do this stuff very well. They're coming back tonight, tomorrow. And I will know very soon. And I am not satisfied with what I've heard.

Q And what do you say about -- Rand Paul says that he's convinced that this had to be the Crown Prince?

THE PRESIDENT: Look, Rand has some ideas. I agree with Rand on a lot of things. I don't want to lose all of that investment that's being made in our country. I don't want to lose a million jobs. I don't want to lose a \$110 billion in terms of investment. But it's really \$450 billion if you include other than military. So that's very important. But we're going to get to the bottom of it.

Yeah.

Q The new Mexican President says he'd like to work with you on a Central American aid package, figuring that if he can put more money to those countries, maybe people would stay put. Are you open to that?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm really looking to make America great again. That's what I do. I'm making America great again. We have been giving so much money to so many different countries for so long, and it's not fair and it's not good. And then we ask them to keep their people in their country, they're unable to do it. It's called "Make America Great Again."

Q You said "lower tax cuts." You said that you wanted tax cuts by November 1st. Congress isn't even in session. How is that possible?

THE PRESIDENT: No, we're going to be passing -- no, no. We're putting in a resolution sometime in the next week, or week and a half, two weeks.

Q A resolution where?

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Q Are you signing an executive order for that?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No. No. I'm going through Congress.

Q But Congress isn't in session though.

THE PRESIDENT: We won't have time to do the vote. We'll do the vote later.

Q Congress is out.

THE PRESIDENT: We'll do the vote after the election.

Q Mr. President, there's two weeks until the midterms. What's your level of confidence about holding on to the House?

THE PRESIDENT: I think their tremendous spirit, maybe like I've never seen, other than in 16'. You don't remember 16'; you're too young. I have never seen spirit like the spirit that we have right now, except the week before the race -- the presidential race, two years ago.

I think the Republicans are going to do very nicely. We're doing very well with the Senate. He was just asking about the race. Other than two years ago -- the presidential race -- I have never seen spirit like I see right now. I think the Republicans are going to do very well.

People are tired of high taxes. We gave the tax cuts. We've done so much. And they want a strong military. They want protection. They want safety. They want security. We give that; the Democrats do not give that. The Democrats don't know what they're doing. They don't know what they're giving.

I think we're going to do very, very well in the race.

Yeah?

Q Do you regret implying that Ted Cruz's dad killed JFK?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't regret anything, honestly. It all worked out very nicely.

Q Hey, Mr. President, you said Californians were rioting over the sanctuary cities. Where?

THE PRESIDENT: You shouldn't have -- take a look. They want to get out of sanctuary cities. Many places in California want to get out of sanctuary cities.

Q But that's not rioting, sir, right?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, it is rioting in some cases.

Q Where are the riots, sir?

Q One more question, Mr. President. On Khashoggi, some conservatives have said that he's an activist, while, you know, there's a general --

THE PRESIDENT: Who's an activist? Who?

Q Khashoggi. Part of the Muslim Brotherhood. And some contend he's a journalist. Who do you think he is?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'm going to have to find out. We're going to find out a lot. We're going to find out. We're going to know a lot over the next two days about the Saudi situation. It's a very sad thing.

Any more?

Q Yeah. Do you have any evidence that there are terrorists as part of this caravan? Or Middle Eastern --

THE PRESIDENT: You know what you should do, Jon? Go into the middle of the caravan, take your cameras, and search. Okay? Search.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. Take your -- Jon, take your camera, go into the middle, and search. You're going to find MS-13, you're going to find Middle Eastern, you're going to find everything. And guess what? We're not allowing them in our country. We want safety. We want safety.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think it's going to happen. I'm not saying (inaudible). But I think we're doing really well. I have never seen such spirit, except for maybe '16, (inaudible) the big election. I have never seen the spirit that we have right now.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: I think the Republicans are going to do very well. I have never spirit like we have. Now, whether it's Kavanaugh, whether it's tax cuts that we gave, whether it's common sense -- I've never seen it. But I'll tell you -- I'll tell you a big factor is what's happening on the border. What's happening on the border was caused by the Democrats because they won't let anybody change immigration laws that are horrible. The worst anywhere in the world.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: No, they didn't. No. No, they didn't. Not at all. That's all fiction.

Q Mr. President, Saudis are going to get to the bottom of (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: We're going to see what happens. And I'm going to know a lot in two days.

I'll see you in Texas. See you in Texas.

Q Mr. President, are you prepared to build up the U.S. nuclear arsenal? You said you're going to pull out of the arms deal.

THE PRESIDENT: Until people come to their senses, we will build it up. Until people come to their senses. Russia has not adhered to the agreement. This should've been done years ago. Until people come to their senses -- we have more money than anybody else, by far. We'll build it up. Until they come to their senses. When they do, then we'll all be smart and we'll all stop. And we'll -- and by the way, not only stop, we'll reduce, which I would love to do. But right now, they have not adhered to the agreement.

Q Is that a threat to Vladimir Putin?

THE PRESIDENT: It's a threat to whoever you want. And it includes China, and it includes Russia, and it includes anybody else that wants to play that game. You can't do that. You can't play that game on me.

Q You want more nukes is what you're saying? You're building up the nuclear arsenal.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Until people get smart. Until they get smart. They have not adhered to the spirit of that agreement, or to the agreement itself -- Russia. China is not included in the agreement. They should be included in the agreement. Until they get smart, there will be nobody that's going to be even close to us.

Q But have you talked to Putin about it?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have not. I have not.

Q The Russians say they've been complying.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't have to speak to him. I don't have to speak. I'm terminating the agreement because they violated the agreement. I'm terminating the agreement.

Thanks everybody. Thank you.

END 2:57 P.M. EDT

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From: White House Press Office (b)(6)
on behalf of White House Press Office
Sent: Monday, October 22, 2018 5:07 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: (b)(6) Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure

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Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release October 22, 2018

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Q Mr. President, there's two weeks until the midterms. What's your level of confidence about holding on to the House?

THE PRESIDENT: I think their tremendous spirit, maybe like I've never seen, other than in 16'. You don't remember 16'; you're too young. I have never seen spirit like the spirit that we have right now, except the week before the race -- the presidential race, two years ago.

I think the Republicans are going to do very nicely. We're doing very well with the Senate. He was just asking about the race. Other than two years ago -- the presidential race -- I have never seen spirit like I see right now. I think the Republicans are going to do very well.

People are tired of high taxes. We gave the tax cuts. We've done so much. And they want a strong military. They want protection. They want safety. They want security. We give that; the Democrats do not give that. The Democrats don't know what they're doing. They don't know what they're giving.

I think we're going to do very, very well in the race.

Yeah?

Q Do you regret implying that Ted Cruz's dad killed JFK?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't regret anything, honestly. It all worked out very nicely.

Q Hey, Mr. President, you said Californians were rioting over the sanctuary cities. Where?

THE PRESIDENT: You shouldn't have -- take a look. They want to get out of sanctuary cities. Many places in California want to get out of sanctuary cities.

Q But that's not rioting, sir, right?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, it is rioting in some cases.

Q Where are the riots, sir?

Q One more question, Mr. President. On Khashoggi, some conservatives have said that he's an activist, while, you know, there's a general --

THE PRESIDENT: Who's an activist? Who?

Q Khashoggi. Part of the Muslim Brotherhood. And some contend he's a journalist. Who do you think he is?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'm going to have to find out. We're going to find out a lot. We're going to find out. We're going to know a lot over the next two days about the Saudi situation. It's a very sad thing.

Any more?

Q Yeah. Do you have any evidence that there are terrorists as part of this caravan? Or Middle Eastern --

THE PRESIDENT: You know what you should do, Jon? Go into the middle of the caravan, take your cameras, and search. Okay? Search.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. Take your -- Jon, take your camera, go into the middle, and search. You're going to find MS-13, you're going to find Middle Eastern, you're going to find everything. And guess what? We're not allowing them in our country. We want safety. We want safety.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think it's going to happen. I'm not saying (inaudible). But I think we're doing really well. I have never seen such spirit, except for maybe '16, (inaudible) the big election. I have never seen the spirit that we have right now.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: I think the Republicans are going to do very well. I have never spirit like we have. Now, whether it's Kavanaugh, whether it's tax cuts that we gave, whether it's common sense -- I've never seen it. But I'll tell you -- I'll tell you a big factor is what's happening on the border. What's happening on the border was caused by the Democrats because they won't let anybody change immigration laws that are horrible. The worst anywhere in the world.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: No, they didn't. No. No, they didn't. Not at all. That's all fiction.

Q Mr. President, Saudis are going to get to the bottom of (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: We're going to see what happens. And I'm going to know a lot in two days.

I'll see you in Texas. See you in Texas.

Q Mr. President, are you prepared to build up the U.S. nuclear arsenal? You said you're going to pull out of the arms deal.

THE PRESIDENT: Until people come to their senses, we will build it up. Until people come to their senses. Russia has not adhered to the agreement. This should've been done years ago. Until people come to their senses -- we have more money than anybody else, by far. We'll build it up. Until they come to their senses. When they do, then we'll all be smart and we'll all stop. And we'll -- and by the way, not only stop, we'll reduce, which I would love to do. But right now, they have not adhered to the agreement.

Q Is that a threat to Vladimir Putin?

THE PRESIDENT: It's a threat to whoever you want. And it includes China, and it includes Russia, and it includes anybody else that wants to play that game. You can't do that. You can't play that game on me.

Q You want more nukes is what you're saying? You're building up the nuclear arsenal.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Until people get smart. Until they get smart. They have not adhered to the spirit of that agreement, or to the agreement itself -- Russia. China is not included in the agreement. They should be included in the agreement. Until they get smart, there will be nobody that's going to be even close to us.

Q But have you talked to Putin about it?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have not. I have not.

Q The Russians say they've been complying.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't have to speak to him. I don't have to speak. I'm terminating the agreement because they violated the agreement. I'm terminating the agreement.

Thanks everybody. Thank you.

END 2:57 P.M. EDT

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From: White House Press Office (b)(6) on behalf of White House Press Office
Sent: Thursday, November 29, 2018 3:19 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure

[The White House]
Office of the Press Secretary
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 29, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
BEFORE MARINE ONE DEPARTURE

South Lawn

10:23 A.M. EST

Q Mr. President, your reaction to Cohen pleading guilty to lying to investigators?

THE PRESIDENT: So Michael Cohen has made many statements to the House, as I understand it, and the Senate. He put out a statement talking about a project, which was essentially, I guess, more or less of an option that we were looking at in Moscow. Everybody knew about it. It was written about in newspapers. It was a well-known project. It was during the early part of '16 and, I guess, even before that. It lasted a short period of time.

I didn't do the project. I decided not to do the project. So I didn't do it. So we're not talking about doing a project; we're talking about not doing a project.

Michael Cohen, what he's doing is -- he was convicted, I guess. You'll have to put it into legal terms. But he was convicted with a fairly long-term sentence on things totally unrelated to the Trump Organization -- having to do with mortgages, and having to do with cheating the IRS perhaps. A lot of different things. I don't know exactly, but he was convicted of various things unrelated to us.

He was given a fairly long jail sentence. And he's a weak person. And by being weak, unlike other people that you watch -- he is a weak person. And what he's trying to do is get a reduced sentence.

So he's lying about a project that everybody knew about. I mean, we were very open with it. We were thinking about building a building. I guess we had -- in a form, it was an option. I don't know what you'd call it. We decided -- I decided ultimately not to do it. There would have been nothing wrong if I did do it. If I did do it, there would have been nothing wrong. That was my business.

Q Did you tell him to lie?

Q When did you decide not to do the project?

THE PRESIDENT: So he's lying, very simply, to get a reduced sentence. Okay?

Q When did you decide not to do the project?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know when I decided, but somewhere during the period of time. I was never very enthused. Somewhere during the period -- because I was running for President. My focus was running for President. But I -- when I run for President, that doesn't mean I'm not allowed to do business. I was doing a lot of different things when I was running.

After I won, obviously I don't do business, when -- from January 20th -- but more importantly -- which is a following year. But I ran a business. In fact, I often joke about the fact that I was the only person that campaigned and simultaneously ran a business.

But that was -- that was a project that we didn't do, I didn't do. That was a project that wasn't done for a lot of reasons. Number one is that I was really -- not that I had to do it -- but I was focused on running for President. I wanted that to be my primary focus, not running or building a building.

Q But Mr. President, you said you had no deals with Russia. You said you had no deals with Russia.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, this was a deal that didn't happen. That was no deal. I mean, if you look, this was an option -- I guess, I don't if I want to -- I want to be very specific. So -- but, to my way of thinking, it was an option that I decided not to do.

Q When did you decide not to do it?

THE PRESIDENT: So we didn't. So if you look, we really didn't have --

Q Did you talk to him about it after you were elected?

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me.

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THE PRESIDENT: So -- excuse me. Excuse me. This was an option, in a form, but here's very simple: We had a position to possibly do a deal to build a building of some kind in Moscow. I decided not to do it. The primary reason -- there could have been other reasons. But the primary reason, it was very simple: I was focused on running for President.

There would be nothing wrong if I did do it. I was running my business while I was campaigning. There was a good chance that I wouldn't have won, in which case I would have gotten back into the business. And why should I lose lots of opportunities?

So here's the story: Go back and look at the paper that Michael Cohen wrote before he testified in the House and/or Senate. It talked about his position. What he's trying to do -- because he's a weak person and not a very smart person. What he's trying to do is end -- and it's very simple. He's got himself a big prison sentence, and he's trying to get a much lesser prison sentence by making up a story.

Now, here's the thing: Even if he was right, it doesn't matter because I was allowed to do whatever I wanted during the campaign. I was running my business -- a lot of different things -- during the campaign.

So, very simply, Michael Cohen is lying and he's trying to get a reduced sentence for things that have nothing to do with me.

Now, let me go a step further: I think you should go back to -- I think it was January. It was just reported very well by Catherine Herridge, who's a terrific reporter on Fox. She talks about a letter that he signed. I don't even remember it. And it specifically talks about this deal.

This deal was a very public deal. Everybody knows about this deal. I wasn't trying to hide anything. Okay.

Q The Russians are still supporting Hamas and Hezbollah --

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot understand you.

Q The Russians are still supporting groups like Hamas and Hezbollah in Syria and Palestine. So when you see Putin, what are you going to tell him about these activities?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're going to talk about it, but we have a lot of -- we have a lot of things to talk about.

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Q Mr. President, you're going into a summit shortly. What is your sense about a trade deal with China? What do you expect to say to Mr. Xi?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we're very close to doing something with China, but I don't know that I want to do it because what we have right now is billions and billions of dollars coming into the United States in the form of tariffs or taxes. So I really don't know.

But I will tell you that I think China wants to make a deal. I'm open to making a deal. But, frankly, I like the deal we have right now.

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Q You have said you were getting a full report on Tuesday. Did you get that report? And what did it say?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I have a couple of reports. We're getting a finalized report. Are you talking about on the Russian situation --

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: -- with the ship --

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THE PRESIDENT: -- and the Ukraine? Yeah, we're getting a finalized report. I'm going to have it on the plane sometime today.

Q Why aren't you meeting with the Crown Prince? Why aren't you meeting with the Crown Prince? Do you not think --

THE PRESIDENT: It just wasn't set up.

Q -- it's important to hear his denial of killing Khashoggi or having knowledge of it in person?

THE PRESIDENT: It only wasn't set up. I mean, I would -- I would have met with him but we didn't set that one up.

Q Why?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm meeting with President Xi, which is a very important meeting having to do with trade. And, as you know, I'm making about three or four meetings. We just didn't have time.

Q Mr. President, are you going to be raising the case of the two Americans being held in China with President Xi?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm going to bring it up. Yes.

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See you all.

END 10:33 A.M. EST

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From: White House Press Office (b)(6) on behalf of White House Press Office
Sent: Sunday, November 18, 2018 2:53 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: Remarks by President Trump During Tour of Malibu Neighborhood | Malibu, California

[The White House]
Office of the Press Secretary
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 18, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
DURING TOUR OF MALIBU NEIGHBORHOOD

Point Mugu
Malibu, California
November 17, 2018

4:06 P.M. PST

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you very much. And again, this is our second stop and this is incredible. We're in Malibu -- and a certain section of Malibu that was lovely. You don't get much better than this. And you see the devastation. I guess a total, you said, of -- what would you say, over 100,000 --

DEPUTY CHIEF SCHULER: Just under 100,000 acres, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: -- over 100,000 acres, which is a tremendous amount of land. You know, 100,000 acres -- people can't envision what that is. It's a tremendous piece of land. And it's devastating to see it.

I have to say, the government officials have done an incredible job. When you look at this devastation and, I guess, at this moment, there are -- in this area, there are three deaths so far.

DEPUTY CHIEF SCHULER: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Three deaths. That's pretty incredible. It's horrible, but it's also pretty incredible -- the job they've done.

They evacuated very early and they took a lot of heat and they made the right decision. So I congratulate you on that because that's a lot of political pressure on not having to do it because nobody thinks this is going to happen. They're all unhappy, but now they're very happy that they left. So that's a great decision.

Law enforcement, again; first responders; the military really helped a lot in both sites that we visited today. And, of course, FEMA and Brock. I think Brock has done a great job. Done a great job. So maybe I'd ask you to say a few words, Brock. Brock Long of FEMA.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Absolutely. Thank you, Mr. President. So we're here, not only down in Southern California but also up in Paradise. And it's our job at FEMA to coordinate the firepower of the federal government down through the governor here to ultimately help the firefighters at the local level and police and emergency managers overcome this disaster.

And so the assistance that we provide is not only going to be able to assist with the debris removal, but more importantly taking care of people. And, you know, mass care to also fire mitigation.

So as you can see, as the wildfires go through an area like this, the land is scorched. And, you know, a little bit of rain is nice but too much rain could be a problem too. So we're already trying to think ahead and work with our partners to try to mitigate what we can of the additional impacts coming. So --

THE PRESIDENT: The towns and everyplace we've visited -- I see and I've asked the question -- they're all going to do an expedited rebuild -- meaning the permits are going to come a lot faster than would normally be the case.

Actually this is an area where it's pretty tough to get permits, and I know they're going to go very fast with expediting and get it rebuilt and redone. And that's a great thing. That will make things happen a lot faster.

Jerry, would you like to say something?

GOVERNOR BROWN: Yeah, as a matter of fact, I've signed an executive order to cut red tape and speed up the permit processes as well as other recovery actions. So that'll help.

And all I can say is that we are going to have to learn a lot more about nature, about the wind, about the fire potential, about how to build, how not to build, how to escape, what measures of protection we can build in.

And it's not going to be cheap but I think we have to carefully, really look into the facts here and take all that we learn and apply it going forward.

And, of course, I won't have to do that; Mr. Newson will do that. (Laughter.) So.

GOVERNOR-ELECT NEWSON: Thanks for the baton. (Laughter.) Yeah. But I mean, it's just, you know, the Mendocino Fire, the Tubbs Fire, the Thomas Fire -- I mean, you just go down this list. And, you know, this is unacceptable -- I mean, we're at a point -- past a point. People have had enough of this. And we've got to deal with this head on.

I mean, the governor has done an amazing job with the legislature the last couple of years. We've invested a record amount of money into our efforts, but we have to do more and this clearly underscores that.

But I also want to underscore a more fundamental point and that is the collaboration and cooperation we're getting from the federal government, and we're very grateful for that. There's no politics being played here.

The President signed an emergency declaration immediately, and I cannot impress upon all the folks here how grateful I am for the conversations we've had -- private, not just public -- over the course of the last few hours, in terms of the expectation going forward that the federal government is not just going to be here today with all of you, but tomorrow and over the course of the next few years as we rebuild.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. That's true. Okay, 100 percent. We'll get it -- we'll get it going.

Would you like to say something?

DEPUTY CHIEF SCHULER: I would just say, on behalf of CAL FIRE and the state fire department: Throughout California, we still remain in critical fire weather. So as this fire and the fires up north continue to gain containment, the challenge isn't over. And through cooperation of agencies throughout California, we are successful. So thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. Chief?

CHIEF OSBY: All right, well, Daryl Osby. Fire chief. Los Angeles County Fire Department.

On behalf of the county of Los Angeles, I just really want to thank the governor and the President here for their presence to get the state and federal resources here and support as it relates to combating this fire. Now, the -- also the resources to rebuild our community.

But I also just want to thank, you know, my counterpart here from CAL FIRE. And our law enforcement partner is not here but, we had all hands on deck as it relates to trying to protect this community and we were successful in getting tens of thousands of people out. And unfortunately we lost property but we saved a lot too.

If you could imagine hurricane-type force winds coming through this community, that we had firefighters and sheriffs protecting the citizens here.

But in conclusion, just once again, Mr. President, governor, thank you for your support. And we're looking forward to rebuilding our communities. And then also looking forward -- from the local, state, and federal level -- to really talk about these challenges and what we can do to mitigate and prevent these things from occurring in the future.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Chief.

Fellas?

MAYOR MULLEN: Rick Mullen, mayor of the city of Malibu. And Mr. President, thank you very much for coming down here --

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

MAYOR MULLEN: -- and showing your concern. And also thank you for all the support you've given us. Governor and governor-elect, I also appreciate everything you've done.

Malibu took it on the chin here, but compared to the fire up north, we didn't lose as many lives. So if there's a silver lining here, it's that we saved a lot of lives. And we've paid for it in frustration for people who are outside, who got the mandatory evacuation order. So thank you for all your patience. We're going to get you back in as quickly as possible.

And for everybody who has suffered a loss here of all their personal belongings and their precious memories, we're going to do everything that we can with the assistance of these fine gentlemen to get it back together. And we will leave no stone unturned to come together. And Malibu will be strong again.

So thank you very much, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

SUPERVISOR FOY: And Mr. President, appreciate -- Peter Foy Ventura County Supervisor -- I just appreciate everything you've done. I appreciate that our fire, and -- both from LA County and Ventura County -- coming together to save lives, like you said.

I mean, it was amazing being a part of this stuff. We've seen a lot of tragedy in Ventura County with the shooting, the whole bit. And I just -- it's been amazing.

But we will rebuild. We will get through this. And I do appreciate, Mr. President, your prayers, your wife's prayers, and all -- and the whole country's prayers for this community. We're strong here in California.

And I appreciate the governor and the governor-elect being here to show that support. And we are going to get through this. But it's going to be tough and I do appreciate everything that's happened here in Malibu too, and the rest of it. So thank you. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you, Peter, and all. You've done such a great job. And you mentioned the shootings. And we're now going over to see some of the families of the victims and the first responders and the police and the law enforcement. Generally, the job they've done is really incredible. Brave.

SUPERVISOR FOY: We saw Ron --

THE PRESIDENT: First one in that door. Right. First one in that door. He took --

SUPERVISOR FOY: He's the hero. Yeah. And I appreciate both the governor, governor elect being at that memorial that happened.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. That's so -- it's a beautiful memorial.

SUPERVISOR FOY: So I appreciate you being out here. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: But so we're going to go over and see them and maybe you're going to be joining us. But we really appreciate. Great job.

SUPERVISOR FOY: Well, thank you. Thank you for what you're doing here too, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: And thank you all.

DEPUTY CHIEF SCHULER: Thank you, sir.

CHIEF OSBY: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

Q Mr. President, actually seeing this with your own eyes, how does that change your perception? Has it changed your perception?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think it's just a horrible thing and it's been going on for a long time. And I think we're going to come up with some plans and methods and mitigation. We're going to have some great success. It's something we can work on -- do much better.

I really believe -- I'm a strong believer -- a lot of cities are in forests -- if you look at Europe and other places. We have a lot of forest states, where they're mostly forests, and they just don't have this problem.

California is a very unique place. And it's got some very unique leadership and some great leadership. And we're going to be working with the leadership -- working with Gavin now, for the most part. And I think we're going to come to some pretty good conclusions and maybe, more importantly, some real solutions to a problem that is a very, very big problem.

Because every year, especially at a certain time of the year, you just turn on and it's automatic that you have these massive forest -- I mean, these are massive fires.

Now, in this case, when you look at where we just left, you're talking about tremendous numbers of death. And here, we had three, I guess. At a minimum, three. That's too much.

SUPERVISOR FOY: That's too many.

THE PRESIDENT: So we're going to work on a lot of means of mitigation and solving a problem that's been a big problem for decades -- long before Jerry, long before Gavin, long before all of us. I mean, this has been going on too long. And I think we can come up with some really great solutions.

And other questions?

Q Mr. President, you often talk about the fact that politics is mean business, sometimes.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, it can be, but it's very nice when we all get together.

Q Yeah, I mean, and now you're having the opportunity to have some face time --

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah.

Q -- with people that you sometimes criticize publically. Do you feel like your relationship with them and potentially with the state of California might change because of that?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think we've developed a very good relationship. I've known Jerry for a long time, but I think we got closer today than we could ever get over the last 20 years. And Gavin I've just met and I've heard terrific things, and I think we've developed a great relationship.

We have to work together. This is a very big problem and we have to solve this problem. And I know that we're going to work together. I have no doubt.

Come here. I have no doubt, right? (Laughter.) We're going to get it done. We have really an obligation.

GOVERNOR-ELECT NEWSON: Absolutely.

THE PRESIDENT: I think we have an obligation.

GOVERNOR-ELECT NEWSON: Absolutely.

THE PRESIDENT: We don't really have a choice. We have to get it done.

GOVERNOR-ELECT NEWSON: Yep.

THE PRESIDENT: And we're going to be working together very closely.

Q A lot of people agree with what you said about land management.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah.

Q But now another big question is, is it possible that climate change is a real issue here and that there needs to be change?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we'll be looking at everything. I mean, it is land management and it's forest management, really, is what you mean. But we're going to be looking at every factor. And we're going to get to the bottom of it. And I think we can do it fairly quickly. I really do.

We'll take the areas that are most exposed to the problem and we'll work on that first. And you know what they are. You probably know what they are right now. But here's an example.

PARTICIPANT: Exactly. Already know what it is. Yeah, on a regular basis.

THE PRESIDENT: But we're going to come up with some really good solutions.

Jennifer, did you have something?

Q Yeah, Mr. President, when you said on Air Force One that you feel like you have more similarities with Governor Brown on -- than we realize, did you mean on climate change or did you just mean in general?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think we have similarities in many ways. And, you know, one real similarity is we both want to come to the right conclusion. And I know I get there, and I know he gets there. And the right conclusion here is to get these forest fires to stop because I really think there's a way of doing that.

And we don't want to turn on every year -- at a certain time, you turn on and it's almost expected. And you're watching from New York or you're watching from Washington, D.C. and you don't really see the gravity of it. I mean, as big as they look on the tube, you don't see what's going on until you come here.

And what we saw at Pleasure -- what a name -- right now.

Q Paradise.

THE PRESIDENT: But when -- what we just saw -- we just left Pleasure --

Q Paradise.

THE PRESIDENT: -- or Paradise -- and what we just saw at Paradise is just, you know, it's just not acceptable. You just --

Q So do you think you have similarities with Governor Brown on climate change?

GOVERNOR BROWN: I -- let me answer that.

Q Yeah, absolutely.

GOVERNOR BROWN: (Laughs.) No, what I would say is, the shock of all this is going to heighten our focus and attention and also our cooperation. The President said we're going to get to the bottom of it. There's a short-term response, mid-term, and longer-term response. And I think we're all going to pull together to do whatever we need.

And we don't get it all agreed to or solved in a week or a month or even a year or two. But over time, I think we're going to get there. We're going to understand better what we're up against.

So I would just say, Mr. President, California for 10,000 years never had more than 300,000 people. Now we got 40 million. So you got to learn to live with nature in a very creative and sophisticated way. And I think that's going to be the challenge. I think we'll meet it.

At least, Newson will meet it because I'm going to be watching from the ranch. (Laughter.)

Q Is it going to require some new funding measure that you will seek from Congress (inaudible) --

THE PRESIDENT: So we're putting in the farm bill, \$500 million. And when you look at that and, you know, when you look at the combination of the two, between Malibu and other places -- I mean, not just the two; it's other places -- it sounds like a lot of money. It's not that much money. The state will contribute. We're all going to contribute. We're going to get it taken care of.

I mean we saw a sight -- and don't forget there are hundreds of people that still aren't accounted for. And that's a tough -- that's a tough situation. Now hopefully they're with their relatives and there won't be a problem, but certainly there will be some that are just be not accounted for.

So we're going to spend the money that -- it's necessary. Is it a -- great, great people that live here and it's unfair to put them through this so often. And Gavin knows that and Jerry knows that. We all know that. All of these folks know it and they've done a fantastic job. They really have.

I mean, you have done, from the law enforcement standpoint, fire and fire prevention standpoint, what you've done is incredible. And they really held it back. This could have been far worse.

And I don't know if you know, but they're still putting out this fire. This fire in another section. How is that going by the way?

DEPUTY CHIEF SCHULER: It's 82 percent contained.

Chief.

CHIEF OSBY: Yeah, we still have some hot spots and some area -- canyons that's we're concerned about. But we think that by November 19th we'll have full containment.

THE PRESIDENT: So in Paradise they have a section that's going absolutely wild right now with additional fire. And just by looking, Jerry, at the map, that's a very vibrant forest that it's right next to.

GOVERNOR BROWN: Yeah, it sure is.

THE PRESIDENT: And they have to -- you know, they're out there fighting. As we're talking here, they're throwing water, they're doing everything you can do. There are a tremendous numbers of very brave people. And if those winds change, you know what can happen? Those people are in big trouble.

So you take a look at what's going on there and you take a look at this because right now, as we're speaking, that's happening. And are you going to be successful in -- do you have winds coming? How long will it take to put out the rest of the fire?

CHIEF OSBY: We're pretty confident right now. We still have offshore winds, but they've really died down significantly.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, this is -- this is good.

CHIEF OSBY: You can see now that we have a marine influence and our firefighters are getting some moisture into -- in this weather. So we still have several thousand firefighters out there, so we're confident that we'll have full containment by November the 19th.

And then, as we stand here, we're starting to repopulate the entire breadth of this incident. And then with the County of Los Angeles and surrounding cities, we're trying to start the rehabilitation and help people get their lives back together.

So that's going to take several years working with our local officials, the county, the state, and the federal government. But once again, we appreciate your support.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're sending a lot of extra people to Paradise. They're going -- I mean, literally, as we speak, we have massive numbers of people going up there. We have large numbers of people coming here. You have -- seem to have it very much under control. Right now the wind has stopped and I assume that's a very good thing, but the wind has stopped.

But one of the problems you had, especially in Paradise, the problem you had was the wind. The wind was -- I mean, they say 70 or 80 miles an hour. That's pretty tough.

Okay, any other questions?

Q Mr. President, you spoke earlier today with your CIA Director, Gina Haspel --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes I did.

Q -- in the wake of these reports that the CIA has assessed that MBS, the Crown Prince, was behind this assassination of Jamal Khashoggi. What do you believe after speaking with your CIA Director? And do you still trust the Saudi's denials?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, I did. I spoke with our CIA Director who's terrific and very knowledgeable and been studying this very closely. And it's a horrible thing that took place -- the killing of a journalist. A very, very bad situation. Khashoggi. And somebody who was respected. It should never have happened.

And we'll be having a very full report of the next two days. Probably Monday or Tuesday, we'll have a very full report.

Q Did the CIA assess that MBS was behind it?

THE PRESIDENT: They haven't assessed anything yet. It's too early; that was very premature report. But that's possible. We're going to see. But we're going to have a report on Tuesday and it will be very complete.

In the meantime, we're doing things to some people that we know for a fact were involved. And we're being very tough on a lot of people.

Q What's this report on Tuesday that you just mentioned?

THE PRESIDENT: We're going to come up a report as to what we think the overall impact was and who caused it and who did it. You're talking about a killing. We're not talking about anything else. We're talking about a killing. So who did it?

Q What do you say to the shooting victims, Mr. President? What do you say to the shooting victims who have now --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're going to see them right now. We're going to see them now.

Q -- who have lost everything? And is there -- does this think maybe there needs to be some changes when it comes to guns or things that could be done? What could be done to prevent this?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'll tell you what, we'll be talking to you in a little while but we're going to see the families right now.

And I hear they've been incredible. The families, the way they've handled it has been -- that was a horrible, horrible event in a great area. An area that's one of the most --

SUPERVISOR FOY: Safe -- one of the safest cities in America.

THE PRESIDENT: -- safest places, right?

SUPERVISOR FOY: Yeah, safest city in America.

THE PRESIDENT: I was reading it, it's like the safest place in America and it happened there.

So we're going to see those families right now and we'll see you back over at the airport. Okay? Thank you all very much.

END 4:24 P.M. PST

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From: White House Press Office (b)(6) on behalf of White House Press Office
Sent: Sunday, November 18, 2018 2:53 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: (b)(6) Remarks by President Trump During Tour of Malibu Neighborhood | Malibu, California

[The White House]
Office of the Press Secretary
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 18, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
DURING TOUR OF MALIBU NEIGHBORHOOD

Point Mugu
Malibu, California
November 17, 2018

4:06 P.M. PST

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you very much. And again, this is our second stop and this is incredible. We're in Malibu -- and a certain section of Malibu that was lovely. You don't get much better than this. And you see the devastation. I guess a total, you said, of -- what would you say, over 100,000 --

DEPUTY CHIEF SCHULER: Just under 100,000 acres, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: -- over 100,000 acres, which is a tremendous amount of land. You know, 100,000 acres -- people can't envision what that is. It's a tremendous piece of land. And it's devastating to see it.

I have to say, the government officials have done an incredible job. When you look at this devastation and, I guess, at this moment, there are -- in this area, there are three deaths so far.

DEPUTY CHIEF SCHULER: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Three deaths. That's pretty incredible. It's horrible, but it's also pretty incredible -- the job they've done.

They evacuated very early and they took a lot of heat and they made the right decision. So I congratulate you on that because that's a lot of political pressure on not having to do it because nobody thinks this is going to happen. They're all unhappy, but now they're very happy that they left. So that's a great decision.

Law enforcement, again; first responders; the military really helped a lot in both sites that we visited today. And, of course, FEMA and Brock. I think Brock has done a great job. Done a great job. So maybe I'd ask you to say a few words, Brock. Brock Long of FEMA.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Absolutely. Thank you, Mr. President. So we're here, not only down in Southern California but also up in Paradise. And it's our job at FEMA to coordinate the firepower of the federal government down through the governor here to ultimately help the firefighters at the local level and police and emergency managers overcome this disaster.

And so the assistance that we provide is not only going to be able to assist with the debris removal, but more importantly taking care of people. And, you know, mass care to also fire mitigation.

So as you can see, as the wildfires go through an area like this, the land is scorched. And, you know, a little bit of rain is nice but too much rain could be a problem too. So we're already trying to think ahead and work with our partners to try to mitigate what we can of the additional impacts coming. So --

THE PRESIDENT: The towns and everyplace we've visited -- I see and I've asked the question -- they're all going to do an expedited rebuild -- meaning the permits are going to come a lot faster than would normally be the case.

Actually this is an area where it's pretty tough to get permits, and I know they're going to go very fast with expediting and get it rebuilt and redone. And that's a great thing. That will make things happen a lot faster.

Jerry, would you like to say something?

GOVERNOR BROWN: Yeah, as a matter of fact, I've signed an executive order to cut red tape and speed up the permit processes as well as other recovery actions. So that'll help.

And all I can say is that we are going to have to learn a lot more about nature, about the wind, about the fire potential, about how to build, how not to build, how to escape, what measures of protection we can build in.

And it's not going to be cheap but I think we have to carefully, really look into the facts here and take all that we learn and apply it going forward.

And, of course, I won't have to do that; Mr. Newson will do that. (Laughter.) So.

GOVERNOR-ELECT NEWSON: Thanks for the baton. (Laughter.) Yeah. But I mean, it's just, you know, the Mendocino Fire, the Tubbs Fire, the Thomas Fire -- I mean, you just go down this list. And, you know, this is unacceptable -- I mean, we're at a point -- past a point. People have had enough of this. And we've got to deal with this head on.

I mean, the governor has done an amazing job with the legislature the last couple of years. We've invested a record amount of money into our efforts, but we have to do more and this clearly underscores that.

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THE PRESIDENT: That's right. That's true. Okay, 100 percent. We'll get it -- we'll get it going.

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THE PRESIDENT: Good. Chief?

CHIEF OSBY: All right, well, Daryl Osby. Fire chief. Los Angeles County Fire Department.

On behalf of the county of Los Angeles, I just really want to thank the governor and the President here for their presence to get the state and federal resources here and support as it relates to combating this fire. Now, the -- also the resources to rebuild our community.

But I also just want to thank, you know, my counterpart here from CAL FIRE. And our law enforcement partner is not here but, we had all hands on deck as it relates to trying to protect this community and we were successful in getting tens of thousands of people out. And unfortunately we lost property but we saved a lot too.

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THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Chief.

Fellas?

MAYOR MULLEN: Rick Mullen, mayor of the city of Malibu. And Mr. President, thank you very much for coming down here --

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

MAYOR MULLEN: -- and showing your concern. And also thank you for all the support you've given us. Governor and governor-elect, I also appreciate everything you've done.

Malibu took it on the chin here, but compared to the fire up north, we didn't lose as many lives. So if there's a silver lining here, it's that we saved a lot of lives. And we've paid for it in frustration for people who are outside, who got the mandatory evacuation order. So thank you for all your patience. We're going to get you back in as quickly as possible.

And for everybody who has suffered a loss here of all their personal belongings and their precious memories, we're going to do everything that we can with the assistance of these fine gentlemen to get it back together. And we will leave no stone unturned to come together. And Malibu will be strong again.

So thank you very much, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

SUPERVISOR FOY: And Mr. President, appreciate -- Peter Foy Ventura County Supervisor -- I just appreciate everything you've done. I appreciate that our fire, and -- both from LA County and Ventura County -- coming together to save lives, like you said.

I mean, it was amazing being a part of this stuff. We've seen a lot of tragedy in Ventura County with the shooting, the whole bit. And I just -- it's been amazing.

But we will rebuild. We will get through this. And I do appreciate, Mr. President, your prayers, your wife's prayers, and all -- and the whole country's prayers for this community. We're strong here in California.

And I appreciate the governor and the governor-elect being here to show that support. And we are going to get through this. But it's going to be tough and I do appreciate everything that's happened here in Malibu too, and the rest of it. So thank you. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you, Peter, and all. You've done such a great job. And you mentioned the shootings. And we're now going over to see some of the families of the victims and the first responders and the police and the law enforcement. Generally, the job they've done is really incredible. Brave.

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THE PRESIDENT: But so we're going to go over and see them and maybe you're going to be joining us. But we really appreciate. Great job.

SUPERVISOR FOY: Well, thank you. Thank you for what you're doing here too, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: And thank you all.

DEPUTY CHIEF SCHULER: Thank you, sir.

CHIEF OSBY: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

Q Mr. President, actually seeing this with your own eyes, how does that change your perception? Has it changed your perception?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think it's just a horrible thing and it's been going on for a long time. And I think we're going to come up with some plans and methods and mitigation. We're going to have some great success. It's something we can work on -- do much better.

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GOVERNOR-ELECT NEWSON: Absolutely.

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GOVERNOR-ELECT NEWSON: Absolutely.

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Jennifer, did you have something?

Q Yeah, Mr. President, when you said on Air Force One that you feel like you have more similarities with Governor Brown on -- than we realize, did you mean on climate change or did you just mean in general?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think we have similarities in many ways. And, you know, one real similarity is we both want to come to the right conclusion. And I know I get there, and I know he gets there. And the right conclusion here is to get these forest fires to stop because I really think there's a way of doing that.

And we don't want to turn on every year -- at a certain time, you turn on and it's almost expected. And you're watching from New York or you're watching from Washington, D.C. and you don't really see the gravity of it. I mean, as big as they look on the tube, you don't see what's going on until you come here.

And what we saw at Pleasure -- what a name -- right now.

Q Paradise.

THE PRESIDENT: But when -- what we just saw -- we just left Pleasure --

Q Paradise.

THE PRESIDENT: -- or Paradise -- and what we just saw at Paradise is just, you know, it's just not acceptable. You just --

Q So do you think you have similarities with Governor Brown on climate change?

GOVERNOR BROWN: I -- let me answer that.

Q Yeah, absolutely.

GOVERNOR BROWN: (Laughs.) No, what I would say is, the shock of all this is going to heighten our focus and attention and also our cooperation. The President said we're going to get to the bottom of it. There's a short-term response, mid-term, and longer-term response. And I think we're all going to pull together to do whatever we need.

And we don't get it all agreed to or solved in a week or a month or even a year or two. But over time, I think we're going to get there. We're going to understand better what we're up against.

So I would just say, Mr. President, California for 10,000 years never had more than 300,000 people. Now we got 40 million. So you got to learn to live with nature in a very creative and sophisticated way. And I think that's going to be the challenge. I think we'll meet it.

At least, Newson will meet it because I'm going to be watching from the ranch. (Laughter.)

Q Is it going to require some new funding measure that you will seek from Congress (inaudible) --

THE PRESIDENT: So we're putting in the farm bill, \$500 million. And when you look at that and, you know, when you look at the combination of the two, between Malibu and other places -- I mean, not just the two; it's other places -- it sounds like a lot of money. It's not that much money. The state will contribute. We're all going to contribute. We're going to get it taken care of.

I mean we saw a sight -- and don't forget there are hundreds of people that still aren't accounted for. And that's a tough -- that's a tough situation. Now hopefully they're with their relatives and there won't be a problem, but certainly there will be some that are just be not accounted for.

So we're going to spend the money that -- it's necessary. Is it a -- great, great people that live here and it's unfair to put them through this so often. And Gavin knows that and Jerry knows that. We all know that. All of these folks know it and they've done a fantastic job. They really have.

I mean, you have done, from the law enforcement standpoint, fire and fire prevention standpoint, what you've done is incredible. And they really held it back. This could have been far worse.

And I don't know if you know, but they're still putting out this fire. This fire in another section. How is that going by the way?

DEPUTY CHIEF SCHULER: It's 82 percent contained.

Chief.

CHIEF OSBY: Yeah, we still have some hot spots and some area -- canyons that's we're concerned about. But we think that by November 19th we'll have full containment.

THE PRESIDENT: So in Paradise they have a section that's going absolutely wild right now with additional fire. And just by looking, Jerry, at the map, that's a very vibrant forest that it's right next to.

GOVERNOR BROWN: Yeah, it sure is.

THE PRESIDENT: And they have to -- you know, they're out there fighting. As we're talking here, they're throwing water, they're doing everything you can do. There are a tremendous numbers of very brave people. And if those winds change, you know what can happen? Those people are in big trouble.

So you take a look at what's going on there and you take a look at this because right now, as we're speaking, that's happening. And are you going to be successful in -- do you have winds coming? How long will it take to put out the rest of the fire?

CHIEF OSBY: We're pretty confident right now. We still have offshore winds, but they've really died down significantly.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, this is -- this is good.

CHIEF OSBY: You can see now that we have a marine influence and our firefighters are getting some moisture into -- in this weather. So we still have several thousand firefighters out there, so we're confident that we'll have full containment by November the 19th.

And then, as we stand here, we're starting to repopulate the entire breadth of this incident. And then with the County of Los Angeles and surrounding cities, we're trying to start the rehabilitation and help people get their lives back together.

So that's going to take several years working with our local officials, the county, the state, and the federal government. But once again, we appreciate your support.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're sending a lot of extra people to Paradise. They're going -- I mean, literally, as we speak, we have massive numbers of people going up there. We have large numbers of people coming here. You have -- seem to have it very much under control. Right now the wind has stopped and I assume that's a very good thing, but the wind has stopped.

But one of the problems you had, especially in Paradise, the problem you had was the wind. The wind was -- I mean, they say 70 or 80 miles an hour. That's pretty tough.

Okay, any other questions?

Q Mr. President, you spoke earlier today with your CIA Director, Gina Haspel --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes I did.

Q -- in the wake of these reports that the CIA has assessed that MBS, the Crown Prince, was behind this assassination of Jamal Khashoggi. What do you believe after speaking with your CIA Director? And do you still trust the Saudi's denials?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, I did. I spoke with our CIA Director who's terrific and very knowledgeable and been studying this very closely. And it's a horrible thing that took place -- the killing of a journalist. A very, very bad situation. Khashoggi. And somebody who was respected. It should never have happened.

And we'll be having a very full report of the next two days. Probably Monday or Tuesday, we'll have a very full report.

Q Did the CIA assess that MBS was behind it?

THE PRESIDENT: They haven't assessed anything yet. It's too early; that was very premature report. But that's possible. We're going to see. But we're going to have a report on Tuesday and it will be very complete.

In the meantime, we're doing things to some people that we know for a fact were involved. And we're being very tough on a lot of people.

Q What's this report on Tuesday that you just mentioned?

THE PRESIDENT: We're going to come up a report as to what we think the overall impact was and who caused it and who did it. You're talking about a killing. We're not talking about anything else. We're talking about a killing. So who did it?

Q What do you say to the shooting victims, Mr. President? What do you say to the shooting victims who have now --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're going to see them right now. We're going to see them now.

Q -- who have lost everything? And is there -- does this think maybe there needs to be some changes when it comes to guns or things that could be done? What could be done to prevent this?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'll tell you what, we'll be talking to you in a little while but we're going to see the families right now.

And I hear they've been incredible. The families, the way they've handled it has been -- that was a horrible, horrible event in a great area. An area that's one of the most --

SUPERVISOR FOY: Safe -- one of the safest cities in America.

THE PRESIDENT: -- safest places, right?

SUPERVISOR FOY: Yeah, safest city in America.

THE PRESIDENT: I was reading it, it's like the safest place in America and it happened there.

So we're going to see those families right now and we'll see you back over at the airport. Okay? Thank you all very much.

END 4:24 P.M. PST

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 15, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
IN BRIEFING ON HURRICANE MICHAEL

Georgia Operations Center for the Red Cross
Macon, Georgia

4:37 P.M. EDT

GOVERNOR DEAL: Mr. President and First Lady, we are honored to have you both here in Georgia, and you're going to get a pretty good view, I think, of what the damage and the assessments that have taken place in our state.

We are fortunate that we did not get hit, in some respects, as nearly as hard as Florida did, but we had extensive damage, especially as it relates to our agricultural community. And you're going to have an opportunity to meet with some of those.

I want to commend you for your Secretaries. And we're, of course, pleased to have our own Secretary as a member of your Cabinet, former Governor Sonny Perdue. You know, between the two of us, we have been the chief executives in the state of Georgia for the last 16 years.

THE PRESIDENT: Right. It's true.

GOVERNOR DEAL: We are very pleased to have him, but we're also pleased to have so many contacts that have been made by the members of your Cabinet. They've done an exceptional job.

And, of course, we are glad to have your FEMA Director here, Brock Long. He and I have talked multiple times, and I have appreciated his involvement and concern about our state. And his people are doing a great job working with our locals. And that's an important thing, as you all know.

I'm going to turn it over to the Administrator right now, for his comments.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Thank you, Governor. I really appreciate the partnership. Not only has the Governor been a strong leader, but also Homer Bryson, the Director of Georgia Emergency Management, behind you.

This is all about partnership. Unfortunately, Georgia is no stranger to hurricanes. This is where I started my career. I married a Georgia girl, by the way, too. But the bottom line is, is there was a significant hit coming into southwest Georgia. Category 2 winds. As you can see, the swath is behind us, Mr. President, here. And not only do you see similar damage where trees are down on homes, and there was a tremendous hit to the communications and power infrastructure, but you're going to see generational losses to the agriculture industry as well. The timing of the storm is pretty tough, as Secretary Perdue would tell you.

But our focus is life sustainment, trying to do everything that we can to get access to all the areas to help get the infrastructure -- the private sector partners and our power partners that are represented here with Georgia Power -- trying to get them access to be able to fix the infrastructure to get the power back on. I believe it's up to about 90 percent back on where we are.

MR. BOWERS: Sure is.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: But we still have a ways to go. Cell communications is coming back online too. But now it's about taking care of people, sir, and making sure that we get them out of shelters and into longer-term housing for those that have lost their homes. Our staff is pushing forward in the field with disaster survivors. And we'll continue to register. We need people to register with 1-800-621-FEMA, or DisasterAssistance.gov in Georgia.

So I'll turn it back over to you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you very much, Brock. I want to just commend you on the job you're doing. We just left Florida, and they are so thrilled with what's happened with our people, our talent. But they're not thrilled about this hurricane, because this was brutal. They haven't seen anything like it. And possibly, there's hasn't been anything like it. The winds are almost 200 miles an hour. Just wiped houses away. The foundations -- everything gone. So we saw some areas that were hard to believe, actually. Actually hard to believe.

But the people are incredible in Florida, in Georgia, in Alabama. And, you know, North Carolina and South Carolina went through a lot two weeks ago, and they got a little bit of the remnants of this one too, on top of it. So, incredible people.

But I want to thank FEMA. First responders, the law enforcement has been so incredible. Secretary Nielsen, you worked so hard. I don't think -- have you gone to sleep in the last two weeks? I don't think so. (Laughter.) But your whole team has been fantastic. And, Governor, I'd like to thank you on behalf of the country. What a job you've done in Georgia. And I have to say Rick Scott in Florida, likewise. The two of you have really done something.

And I just spoke to the great Governor of Alabama, and she is in there -- she is in there fighting and also doing. We have terrific people running these states. And I want to thank you very much -- really, very much.

And, Brock, please say compliments to everybody, from myself, the First Lady, Secretary Perdue -- who used to be the Governor of Georgia, as we said. But you have been very special. You know more about agriculture than any human being that I've ever spoken to. (Laughter.) And he doesn't like it when the hurricanes wipe out the crops. They just wiped them out. That doesn't make you feel too good; we were talking about it. He doesn't like to see that. But Sonny Perdue has been an incredible Secretary of Agriculture.

And, Sonny, how about saying a little bit?

SECRETARY PERDUE: I want to reiterate what Governor Deal said, President. Your administration is making a reputation for being more connected to your state and local partners than any other administration I can ever remember. Commissioner Black, Governor, I've experienced this well -- all the way from the local community leaders to state legislators to governors, the people you've appointed in your office are reaching out here, making people feel like we have truly one government. And that's -- and that is wonderful to be a part of that. And I want to thank you for allowing us to do that. Because it makes a difference.

When people undergo situations like this -- not even disasters, they're connected -- but when they go through like this, they feel like they've got a lifeline to FEMA, to Secretary Nielsen, to any of your administration, and to you particularly. And we want to say -- I'm glad to be a part of that. And we -- Commissioner Black and I toured some of the ag area yesterday. There are tremendous losses, but our farmers are resilient. We're going to help them, you're going to help them, and they'll be okay.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let me ask you this, Sonny and Commissioner: When Brock says "generational" damage, I don't like the sound of "generational" damage. What does that mean? And how long does that take to get back?

SECRETARY PERDUE: As we were talking, coming up, on pecan trees particularly, these trees typically start bearing about seven years after they're planted. And then they don't reach economic profitability until about 10 years. So that's what we're talking about. That's half a generation.

THE PRESIDENT: That's a long time.

SECRETARY PERDUE: These farmers -- many percentages of pecan trees across the country, across the state down in southwest Georgia, were toppled. And those that weren't toppled, the nuts have blown off. So they were looking for bumper crop, the cotton, and pecans, and peanuts. And the devastation there is heartbreaking to hear and to (inaudible). And you'll talk to some farmers later today.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. Very good.

Please.

COMMISSIONER BLACK: Mr. President, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BLACK: God bless you. And thank you for being here. We lead the nation in peanut production, pecan production, forest product production. We're leaders in vegetable. So that's production. Today we're leading in destruction, unfortunately. We will lead in rebuilding.

THE PRESIDENT: No doubt about it.

COMMISSIONER BLACK: And it's -- I had numbers from the intergovernmental relations from the White House. I had two telephone calls while the wind was still blowing. And I've had good fortune in the last year and a half or so to be in and out in places where folks who do the job I do never had the opportunity. The Governor -- the Secretary used to say with Agriculture -- when he was the governor, and when Governor Deal -- is that we get to come into the front door. Oftentimes, it's been the backdoor. And it's certainly been -- it's not been that way, and we're grateful to you.

And I promise you, we're going to continue to work. We do have an outstanding group of people for you to visit personally with this afternoon.

THE PRESIDENT: I look forward to that. I look forward to seeing some of the farmers. They're great people. And we will do it. And that is true: Jimmy Carter, peanut farmer, and a nice man. He is a nice man. Met him on numerous occasions. And if you think about it, that's what he did, right? Peanuts. So it's great.

Do you have any questions, please?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Mr. President, also the American Red Cross, a huge partner as well.

THE PRESIDENT: Good job. I heard -- good job.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: You know, it takes a whole community to overcome these types of disasters, and so it's not only neighbor helping neighbor all the way to federal government. But if it wasn't for the volunteer organizations active in disaster, these guys do a whole lot to help shelter -- temporary shelter people. And that's what's going on here.

MS. MEWBORN: And we couldn't do it without you, so thank you. We have great partnership.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. And power is coming back pretty quickly, right?

MR. BOWERS: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: I'm not surprised. I know your company well. I'm not surprised.

Any questions, please?

Q Mr. President, you just left Florida. Are you concerned that there is a possibility that up to 17 F-22 stealth bombers were damaged at Tyndall Air Force Base? Because they weren't taken --

THE PRESIDENT: No, I'm not hearing that. They were under repair. Many of the aircraft were flown out prior to the hurricane, but some of them can't because the engines are taken out and they're doing a lot of heavy repairing work. We're going to have a full report. There was some damage. Not nearly as bad as we first heard.

Q Are you concerned about how much that might cost, though?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm always concerned about cost. I don't like it. In fact, my first question is, "Why didn't they take them out?" That's because they were fixing.

You know, this hurricane happened very quickly. In fact, it was a storm. Nobody thought it was a big deal, and then all of a sudden, it started and then became a Category 4. It happened very quickly.

No, we think it's much better than we originally thought, but there was some damage, no question about it. And the F-22 is one of my all-time favorite planes. To me, it's the most beautiful fighter jet in the world, and one of the best.

Yes, sir.

Q Are you going to ask Congress for supplementary funding --

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah.

Q -- to respond to these hurricanes?

THE PRESIDENT: The governors know that we're there for them. I've spoken with Rick Scott in Florida. Governor, you know that. We're right with you. And we'll be helping Alabama, we'll be helping all of the -- as we have been with North Carolina and South Carolina. So, we're there.

Q Are you worried at all about the deficit -- the new numbers that just came out?

THE PRESIDENT: I always worry about the deficit. But what are you going to do? You have a hurricane. I have to take care of the people. So the deficit is always a problem for me, but we take care of our people, most importantly.

Q Is there a preliminary estimate on how much it's going to cost to help all these people?

THE PRESIDENT: I think, Governor, did you want to make a comment on that? Do you have any ideas yet? It's very early.

GOVERNOR DEAL: Mr. President, it's still too early, unless Brock has some more.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: So, it will take some time. We do what we call preliminary damage assessments and to get more details, but the true cost won't be revealed for quite some time.

Q Mr. President, when you ran for President, did you ever imagine you would spend this much time thinking about the weather?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the weather has been a factor. And yet, they say the worst hurricanes were 50 years ago, if you can believe it. In fact, the one that they say was worse -- so two or three worse -- one was in 1890s, and one was exactly 50 years ago. The winds were 200 miles an hour. So who knows? But that's what the -- that's what the numbers are. We are --

Q You addressed climate change --

THE PRESIDENT: I did. I addressed it last night on "60 Minutes."

Q Is there nothing about the number of storms that come in that make you think, "Gee, something is changing"?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we have a big number. And, you know, for a long period of time, we had very few. I have a home in Palm Beach, Florida; I'm there a lot. And frankly, we had years where we had none, and then over the last couple of years we had more. And hopefully, we'll go back to many years where we have none. But we have been hit by the weather, there's no question about it.

But it is interesting that the worst of all time, 1890 -- and, as you know, 50 years ago was the last really great one. That was supposed to be worse. I don't know if it gets worse. I've never seen anything where houses were ripped off with the foundations. You see, the foundations are actually taken out. So it's really -- it's pretty amazing. But we have to get it taken care of, most importantly.

Anybody else?

Q Last night, in your comments about climate change, you said that there is something there. And previously, in the past, you've called it a hoax. What changed your mind? Was it because it was like this?

THE PRESIDENT: No, there's something there. There's no question. There is something there -- manmade or not. I mean, there's something there. And it's going to go, and it's going to go back and forth. But there is something there.

But again, 50 years ago, it was brutal. The 1890s were brutal. You have different times. And the main thing is we have to make sure things get brought back to perfect condition. That's what we're doing.

We have tremendous support from the farmers. The farmers really got hurt, especially in Georgia. I mean, Florida was housing and other things. And over here, your farmers we really -- those crops were really uprooted. But we're going to get it taken care of.

Q Mr. President, the latest research from NOAA says that climate change will make the strongest hurricanes even stronger. Do you agree with that assessment?

THE PRESIDENT: I'll have to look at it. I haven't seen that. But I would certainly have to look at it.

Q When you see impacts like this to the U.S., does it affect at all your decision in renegotiating the Paris Climate Accord?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I want crystal clean water. I want the cleanest air on the planet -- which, by the way, now we have. It's gotten better since last year -- even better. And I'm very, very tough on that.

So when you talk about environmental, I am truly an environmentalist. A lot people smile when they hear that. But I have the cleanest air, and I'm going to have the cleanest air. But that doesn't mean we have to put every one of our businesses out of business. That doesn't mean that we can't compete or we're not allowed to compete with other nations that aren't doing what we're doing.

And we're competing very well. Our nation is the hottest nation economically on the planet, by far, even though we're very big. I mean, we're up \$10.7 [trillion] -- \$11.7 trillion, since I got elected. Nobody thought that would be possible. And other nations -- as an example, China -- not that I wish this, but they're down many trillions of dollars. So we're doing really well, and I want to keep it that way.

Yes, please.

Q Sir, can I ask you an off-topic question? There's been reports that the Saudis might say that Khashoggi was killed during an unauthorized interrogation. Does that sound (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: I just saw that, Steve. I just don't know. I'm going to have to see what they say. And we're working very closely with Saudi Arabia and with Turkey, and they are working together to figure out what happened. And they want to know what happened, also.

So a lot of people are working on it, Steve. A lot of people. And we'll be bound very much by that. We'll see.

I heard that report but nobody knows if it's an official report. So far, it's just the rumor -- the rumor of a report coming out.

Yes, ma'am.

Q What instructions did you give Pompeo -- Secretary Pompeo -- when he was sent over today?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'm really sending him just to find out really, firsthand, what happened, what they know, what's going on. He may go to Turkey; he may not.

He may meet with all of them together, but we want to find out what happened. And he's got instructions to find out what happened. We're talking about the whole the situation with Saudi Arabia that you've been reading about, I'm sure, very much. But it's a terrible situation, there's no question about it. I don't like it one bit.

Okay? Yes.

Q Has your thinking changed about Secretary Mnuchin going to the conference?

THE PRESIDENT: He's going to make that decision. We're going to see who's going. He's got a while to go. You know, it's Friday. He has to know by the end of Friday. And we'll make that decision. We haven't made a decision about going yet. But he's going to make that decision sometime prior to Friday.

Q Since we already went off topic, Mr. President, Senator Warren released some of her DNA results that show a strong likelihood that she does have Native American roots.

THE PRESIDENT: How much? One one-thousandth? (Laughter.)

Q Do you owe her an apology? Or what about the money that --

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't. Absolutely. Do I owe her? She owes the country an apology.

What's her percentage? One one-thousandth?

Q I don't have the exact numbers in front of me.

THE PRESIDENT: When you have the percentage, tell me what the percentage is.

Q What about the money that you told her you would donate?

THE PRESIDENT: You mean if she gets the nomination, in a debate, where I was going to have her tested? I'll only do it if I can test her personally. Okay? That will not be something I enjoy doing either.

Okay, what else?

Q Mr. President, over the weekend, you signaled that you're considering reviving the child separation policy. Have you discussed this with --

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't consider anything. I'm considering changing the immigration laws, and I've been doing it for a while. Because we have the worst -- as the Governor can tell you, as everybody can tell you, as Sonny can tell you from your time as governor -- we have the worst immigration laws and dumbest immigration laws in the history of the world. Okay? There is no country in the world that has such stupid laws as we do.

Somebody comes into our country, they put one foot on our land, and we have to bring them through a long court process. Or we have catch and release, which is even worse. We catch them, Commissioner -- we catch them, we find out they're a criminal, we write them up, and then we release them and we tell them to come back in three or four years for a court case, and they never show up.

We have the dumbest laws in history, and it's because of the Democrats. Because they want to have these laws that way. And it is so crazy, and we are getting them changed one by one. And we are very tough on the border, and we have to be very tough on the border.

So we're looking at all immigration laws. They are a disaster. They're a laughingstock all over the world. And this country will never be a laughingstock when I'm running it. We've made a lot of progress, too.

Thank you all very much. Thank you.

END 4:55 P.M. EDT

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Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

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THE PRESIDENT: Right. It's true.

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And, of course, we are glad to have your FEMA Director here, Brock Long. He and I have talked multiple times, and I have appreciated his involvement and concern about our state. And his people are doing a great job working with our locals. And that's an important thing, as you all know.

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But our focus is life sustainment, trying to do everything that we can to get access to all the areas to help get the infrastructure -- the private sector partners and our power partners that are represented here with Georgia Power -- trying to get them access to be able to fix the infrastructure to get the power back on. I believe it's up to about 90 percent back on where we are.

MR. BOWERS: Sure is.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: But we still have a ways to go. Cell communications is coming back online too. But now it's about taking care of people, sir, and making sure that we get them out of shelters and into longer-term housing for those that have lost their homes. Our staff is pushing forward in the field with disaster survivors. And we'll continue to register. We need people to register with 1-800-621-FEMA, or DisasterAssistance.gov in Georgia.

So I'll turn it back over to you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you very much, Brock. I want to just commend you on the job you're doing. We just left Florida, and they are so thrilled with what's happened with our people, our talent. But they're not thrilled about this hurricane, because this was brutal. They haven't seen anything like it. And possibly, there's hasn't been anything like it. The winds are almost 200 miles an hour. Just wiped houses away. The foundations -- everything gone. So we saw some areas that were hard to believe, actually. Actually hard to believe.

But the people are incredible in Florida, in Georgia, in Alabama. And, you know, North Carolina and South Carolina went through a lot two weeks ago, and they got a little bit of the remnants of this one too, on top of it. So, incredible people.

But I want to thank FEMA. First responders, the law enforcement has been so incredible. Secretary Nielsen, you worked so hard. I don't think -- have you gone to sleep in the last two weeks? I don't think so. (Laughter.) But your whole team has been fantastic. And, Governor, I'd like to thank you on behalf of the country. What a job you've done in Georgia. And I have to say Rick Scott in Florida, likewise. The two of you have really done something.

And I just spoke to the great Governor of Alabama, and she is in there -- she is in there fighting and also doing. We have terrific people running these states. And I want to thank you very much -- really, very much.

And, Brock, please say compliments to everybody, from myself, the First Lady, Secretary Perdue -- who used to be the Governor of Georgia, as we said. But you have been very special. You know more about agriculture than any human being that I've ever spoken to. (Laughter.) And he doesn't like it when the hurricanes wipe out the crops. They just wiped them out. That doesn't make you feel too good; we were talking about it. He doesn't like to see that. But Sonny Perdue has been an incredible Secretary of Agriculture.

And, Sonny, how about saying a little bit?

SECRETARY PERDUE: I want to reiterate what Governor Deal said, President. Your administration is making a reputation for being more connected to your state and local partners than any other administration I can ever remember. Commissioner Black, Governor, I've experienced this well -- all the way from the local community leaders to state legislators to governors, the people you've appointed in your office are reaching out here, making people feel like we have truly one government. And that's -- and that is wonderful to be a part of that. And I want to thank you for allowing us to do that. Because it makes a difference.

When people undergo situations like this -- not even disasters, they're connected -- but when they go through like this, they feel like they've got a lifeline to FEMA, to Secretary Nielsen, to any of your administration, and to you particularly. And we want to say -- I'm glad to be a part of that. And we -- Commissioner Black and I toured some of the ag area yesterday. There are tremendous losses, but our farmers are resilient. We're going to help them, you're going to help them, and they'll be okay.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let me ask you this, Sonny and Commissioner: When Brock says "generational" damage, I don't like the sound of "generational" damage. What does that mean? And how long does that take to get back?

SECRETARY PERDUE: As we were talking, coming up, on pecan trees particularly, these trees typically start bearing about seven years after they're planted. And then they don't reach economic profitability until about 10 years. So that's what we're talking about. That's half a generation.

THE PRESIDENT: That's a long time.

SECRETARY PERDUE: These farmers -- many percentages of pecan trees across the country, across the state down in southwest Georgia, were toppled. And those that weren't toppled, the nuts have blown off. So they were looking for bumper crop, the cotton, and pecans, and peanuts. And the devastation there is heartbreaking to hear and to (inaudible). And you'll talk to some farmers later today.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. Very good.

Please.

COMMISSIONER BLACK: Mr. President, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BLACK: God bless you. And thank you for being here. We lead the nation in peanut production, pecan production, forest product production. We're leaders in vegetable. So that's production. Today we're leading in destruction, unfortunately. We will lead in rebuilding.

THE PRESIDENT: No doubt about it.

COMMISSIONER BLACK: And it's -- I had numbers from the intergovernmental relations from the White House. I had two telephone calls while the wind was still blowing. And I've had good fortune in the last year and a half or so to be in and out in places where folks who do the job I do never had the opportunity. The Governor -- the Secretary used to say with Agriculture -- when he was the governor, and when Governor Deal -- is that we get to come into the front door. Oftentimes, it's been the backdoor. And it's certainly been -- it's not been that way, and we're grateful to you.

And I promise you, we're going to continue to work. We do have an outstanding group of people for you to visit personally with this afternoon.

THE PRESIDENT: I look forward to that. I look forward to seeing some of the farmers. They're great people. And we will do it. And that is true: Jimmy Carter, peanut farmer, and a nice man. He is a nice man. Met him on numerous occasions. And if you think about it, that's what he did, right? Peanuts. So it's great.

Do you have any questions, please?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Mr. President, also the American Red Cross, a huge partner as well.

THE PRESIDENT: Good job. I heard -- good job.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: You know, it takes a whole community to overcome these types of disasters, and so it's not only neighbor helping neighbor all the way to federal government. But if it wasn't for the volunteer organizations active in disaster, these guys do a whole lot to help shelter -- temporary shelter people. And that's what's going on here.

MS. MEWBORN: And we couldn't do it without you, so thank you. We have great partnership.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. And power is coming back pretty quickly, right?

MR. BOWERS: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: I'm not surprised. I know your company well. I'm not surprised.

Any questions, please?

Q Mr. President, you just left Florida. Are you concerned that there is a possibility that up to 17 F-22 stealth bombers were damaged at Tyndall Air Force Base? Because they weren't taken --

THE PRESIDENT: No, I'm not hearing that. They were under repair. Many of the aircraft were flown out prior to the hurricane, but some of them can't because the engines are taken out and they're doing a lot of heavy repairing work. We're going to have a full report. There was some damage. Not nearly as bad as we first heard.

Q Are you concerned about how much that might cost, though?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm always concerned about cost. I don't like it. In fact, my first question is, "Why didn't they take them out?" That's because they were fixing.

You know, this hurricane happened very quickly. In fact, it was a storm. Nobody thought it was a big deal, and then all of a sudden, it started and then became a Category 4. It happened very quickly.

No, we think it's much better than we originally thought, but there was some damage, no question about it. And the F-22 is one of my all-time favorite planes. To me, it's the most beautiful fighter jet in the world, and one of the best.

Yes, sir.

Q Are you going to ask Congress for supplementary funding --

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah.

Q -- to respond to these hurricanes?

THE PRESIDENT: The governors know that we're there for them. I've spoken with Rick Scott in Florida. Governor, you know that. We're right with you. And we'll be helping Alabama, we'll be helping all of the -- as we have been with North Carolina and South Carolina. So, we're there.

Q Are you worried at all about the deficit -- the new numbers that just came out?

THE PRESIDENT: I always worry about the deficit. But what are you going to do? You have a hurricane. I have to take care of the people. So the deficit is always a problem for me, but we take care of our people, most importantly.

Q Is there a preliminary estimate on how much it's going to cost to help all these people?

THE PRESIDENT: I think, Governor, did you want to make a comment on that? Do you have any ideas yet? It's very early.

GOVERNOR DEAL: Mr. President, it's still too early, unless Brock has some more.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: So, it will take some time. We do what we call preliminary damage assessments and to get more details, but the true cost won't be revealed for quite some time.

Q Mr. President, when you ran for President, did you ever imagine you would spend this much time thinking about the weather?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the weather has been a factor. And yet, they say the worst hurricanes were 50 years ago, if you can believe it. In fact, the one that they say was worse -- so two or three worse -- one was in 1890s, and one was exactly 50 years ago. The winds were 200 miles an hour. So who knows? But that's what the -- that's what the numbers are. We are --

Q You addressed climate change --

THE PRESIDENT: I did. I addressed it last night on "60 Minutes."

Q Is there nothing about the number of storms that come in that make you think, "Gee, something is changing"?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we have a big number. And, you know, for a long period of time, we had very few. I have a home in Palm Beach, Florida; I'm there a lot. And frankly, we had years where we had none, and then over the last couple of years we had more. And hopefully, we'll go back to many years where we have none. But we have been hit by the weather, there's no question about it.

But it is interesting that the worst of all time, 1890 -- and, as you know, 50 years ago was the last really great one. That was supposed to be worse. I don't know if it gets worse. I've never seen anything where houses were ripped off with the foundations. You see, the foundations are actually taken out. So it's really -- it's pretty amazing. But we have to get it taken care of, most importantly.

Anybody else?

Q Last night, in your comments about climate change, you said that there is something there. And previously, in the past, you've called it a hoax. What changed your mind? Was it because it was like this?

THE PRESIDENT: No, there's something there. There's no question. There is something there -- manmade or not. I mean, there's something there. And it's going to go, and it's going to go back and forth. But there is something there.

But again, 50 years ago, it was brutal. The 1890s were brutal. You have different times. And the main thing is we have to make sure things get brought back to perfect condition. That's what we're doing.

We have tremendous support from the farmers. The farmers really got hurt, especially in Georgia. I mean, Florida was housing and other things. And over here, your farmers we really -- those crops were really uprooted. But we're going to get it taken care of.

Q Mr. President, the latest research from NOAA says that climate change will make the strongest hurricanes even stronger. Do you agree with that assessment?

THE PRESIDENT: I'll have to look at it. I haven't seen that. But I would certainly have to look at it.

Q When you see impacts like this to the U.S., does it affect at all your decision in renegotiating the Paris Climate Accord?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I want crystal clean water. I want the cleanest air on the planet -- which, by the way, now we have. It's gotten better since last year -- even better. And I'm very, very tough on that.

So when you talk about environmental, I am truly an environmentalist. A lot people smile when they hear that. But I have the cleanest air, and I'm going to have the cleanest air. But that doesn't mean we have to put every one of our businesses out of business. That doesn't mean that we can't compete or we're not allowed to compete with other nations that aren't doing what we're doing.

And we're competing very well. Our nation is the hottest nation economically on the planet, by far, even though we're very big. I mean, we're up \$10.7 [trillion] -- \$11.7 trillion, since I got elected. Nobody thought that would be possible. And other nations -- as an example, China -- not that I wish this, but they're down many trillions of dollars. So we're doing really well, and I want to keep it that way.

Yes, please.

Q Sir, can I ask you an off-topic question? There's been reports that the Saudis might say that Khashoggi was killed during an unauthorized interrogation. Does that sound (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: I just saw that, Steve. I just don't know. I'm going to have to see what they say. And we're working very closely with Saudi Arabia and with Turkey, and they are working together to figure out what happened. And they want to know what happened, also.

So a lot of people are working on it, Steve. A lot of people. And we'll be bound very much by that. We'll see.

I heard that report but nobody knows if it's an official report. So far, it's just the rumor -- the rumor of a report coming out.

Yes, ma'am.

Q What instructions did you give Pompeo -- Secretary Pompeo -- when he was sent over today?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'm really sending him just to find out really, firsthand, what happened, what they know, what's going on. He may go to Turkey; he may not.

He may meet with all of them together, but we want to find out what happened. And he's got instructions to find out what happened. We're talking about the whole the situation with Saudi Arabia that you've been reading about, I'm sure, very much. But it's a terrible situation, there's no question about it. I don't like it one bit.

Okay? Yes.

Q Has your thinking changed about Secretary Mnuchin going to the conference?

THE PRESIDENT: He's going to make that decision. We're going to see who's going. He's got a while to go. You know, it's Friday. He has to know by the end of Friday. And we'll make that decision. We haven't made a decision about going yet. But he's going to make that decision sometime prior to Friday.

Q Since we already went off topic, Mr. President, Senator Warren released some of her DNA results that show a strong likelihood that she does have Native American roots.

THE PRESIDENT: How much? One one-thousandth? (Laughter.)

Q Do you owe her an apology? Or what about the money that --

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't. Absolutely. Do I owe her? She owes the country an apology.

What's her percentage? One one-thousandth?

Q I don't have the exact numbers in front of me.

THE PRESIDENT: When you have the percentage, tell me what the percentage is.

Q What about the money that you told her you would donate?

THE PRESIDENT: You mean if she gets the nomination, in a debate, where I was going to have her tested? I'll only do it if I can test her personally. Okay? That will not be something I enjoy doing either.

Okay, what else?

Q Mr. President, over the weekend, you signaled that you're considering reviving the child separation policy. Have you discussed this with --

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't consider anything. I'm considering changing the immigration laws, and I've been doing it for a while. Because we have the worst -- as the Governor can tell you, as everybody can tell you, as Sonny can tell you from your time as governor -- we have the worst immigration laws and dumbest immigration laws in the history of the world. Okay? There is no country in the world that has such stupid laws as we do.

Somebody comes into our country, they put one foot on our land, and we have to bring them through a long court process. Or we have catch and release, which is even worse. We catch them, Commissioner -- we catch them, we find out they're a criminal, we write them up, and then we release them and we tell them to come back in three or four years for a court case, and they never show up.

We have the dumbest laws in history, and it's because of the Democrats. Because they want to have these laws that way. And it is so crazy, and we are getting them changed one by one. And we are very tough on the border, and we have to be very tough on the border.

So we're looking at all immigration laws. They are a disaster. They're a laughingstock all over the world. And this country will never be a laughingstock when I'm running it. We've made a lot of progress, too.

Thank you all very much. Thank you.

END 4:55 P.M. EDT

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 10, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
IN BRIEFING WITH DHS SECRETARY KIRSTJEN NIELSEN
AND FEMA ADMINISTRATOR BROCK LONG
ON HURRICANE MICHAEL

Oval Office

12:12 P.M. EDT

SECRETARY NIELSEN: All right, so I wanted to update you on Hurricane Michael. It's about 40 miles off the coast. It's starting to feel the effects now. It is a very dangerous Category 4. Just to remind the press, Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria were Cat fours. So these are big storms that we're looking at.

So it'll hit the Panhandle, as you can see on this one right here, sir. And then it will go through Georgia and the Carolinas. Unfortunately, on the tail end, we do expect additional rain in the Carolinas, which could lead to additional flooding.

FEMA is leaning forward, as we are with our interagency partners. We're forward deployed. We have search and rescue ready to go. We're in very close contact with state and local authorities. We've all spoken with the governor and local officials.

And I'll turn it over to Brock to give additional details.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Thank you, Secretary. Unfortunately, this is a Gulf Coast hurricane of the worst kind because all of the elements associated with hurricanes come into play.

So, as you see on the left, the storm surge estimates are anywhere between 9 and 14 feet. The storm surge is going to be the worst where the eye makes landfall -- just to the east or south of where the eye makes landfall. Somewhere right now, it's projected between Panama City, Apalachicola, and then it's going to push forward.

So not only is it going to bring 14 feet of ocean water and coastal flood inundation, there will be wave action on top of that, which is the primary driver of why we evacuate, sir.

And then, coupled with that, you've got over-145-mile-per-hour winds. You know, structures built before 2001 are not designed to handle that type of wind, typically.

And it's going to, unfortunately, push through the states. So we're asking citizens in southwest Georgia, central Georgia to be vigilant and to make sure that they understand what's about to come -- because this area is going to see a Cat 1, Cat 2 storm as it moves inland. And with the vegetation there, what we're anticipating is a lot of downed trees impacting the power grid.

And here, again, we're going to see a lot of devastation along the coast, structurally. And then, as it moves in, you're going to see power outages throughout the state.

And then, unfortunately, you're going to see rainfall into South Carolina and North Carolina. The Cape Fear was projected to start receding from Hurricane Florence two days ago, and this will basically exacerbate the problem and add to it a little bit, to where it's going to keep those waters from receding a little bit as it exits the state by Friday.

THE PRESIDENT: So they're reporting that this is one of the most powerful hurricanes ever to hit our country. Is that actually a fact?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Well, you know, so in this area, this would be the most intense hurricane that has struck this area since 1851, if I remember correctly. So --

THE PRESIDENT: A long time.

SECRETARY NIELSEN: This is a big storm.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Yes. Intense. Very intense. But --

THE PRESIDENT: And this one is going to heavy rain or is it going to be the winds that are going to be the problem?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Storm surge and winds. And then for Georgia, they're going to see high inland winds, so you may see sustained Category 1, Category 2 winds with higher gusts that are associated.

So we're expecting a lot of damage inland as well. But we have leaned forward with Governor Scott and his staff, and Director Wes Maul down in Florida. They've been leaning forward as well.

And right now, there's no identified shortfalls when it comes to pre-positioning. So we have teams, equipment, personnel not only with and embedded with state-of-Florida staff and some of the local county emergency managers. But we have equipment teams staged in Maxwell, to Atlanta, to Orlando ready to move in once we can -- once the elements subside and push through, and then we can move in and attack.

SECRETARY NIELSEN: And we're working really closely with the private sector. So they've got 14 states -- different utilities from 14 states are already ready to --

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, (inaudible).

SECRETARY NIELSEN: -- are ready to help with any energy outages.

THE PRESIDENT: Electric companies are from all over the country, actually. They're all lined up. As soon as it goes by, they're going to be working. And we've got food supplies, food chains. We're working with all of the states.

And let me ask you: This started out very innocently a week ago. This was a small storm in an area they never thought. They said it grew into a monster.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Right. So the first initial indications from the National Hurricane Center started coming in around Saturday. And they picked it up and started raising the flag that, "Hey, this system is going to go from a wave to a depression, and it could potentially rapidly intensify." And unfortunately, that's typical of the Gulf Coast.

And when they do this, those citizens have less time to prepare or heed the warnings. We are concerned that many citizens chose not to heed those warnings, but we're prepared with search and rescue teams to try to go in and do what we can.

THE PRESIDENT: Any questions for us?

Q Yes. Are you concerned that the folks in Florida and Georgia in the storm's path aren't prepared enough and that there aren't enough evacuations, to follow up on that point?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Yesterday, we were concerned that we were not -- we did not like the level of evacuation activity that we were seeing. And, you know, Governor Scott -- kudos to him. He leaned forward, used the new wireless emergency alert capabilities that we have, and sent out a text -- you know, text messaging last night. Leaned forward and said, "Hey, get out of there."

And so we were trying to get people to really take the storm seriously. A lot of people did heed the warning, but then there are those who chose to stay behind. And unfortunately, first responders may not be able to go in and rescue those who dial 911 at this point.

Q Mr. President, can you give us a sense of the officials you've been in contact with? Have you spoken to the governor?

THE PRESIDENT: I have. I have. And the other governors, depending on what happens here -- but they are all either contacted or are in the process. I had a long talk with Rick Scott -- Governor Scott, of Florida. Very well coordinated with all of the states.

And, you know, one of the things that must be said is it's not so easy for some of these people to leave. Some of the areas are very poor. It's not easy for a person without the necessary money to leave. So what we've done is we've sent buses. We've sent a lot of different -- we're doing a lot of different things to try and remove people from the area. But a lot of people are very poor in certain of those areas, and it's very tough for them to leave. That's one of the problems you're finding, I guess, huh?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Yeah. In some cases, what we asked to do on blue-sky days is ask people, who may not have the means or the mechanisms to get out of town, to register with their local emergency management agencies -- and Florida has been pretty robust in doing that -- so that we have some idea of how to pre-plan for that.

And then we do what we can to be able to support the movement of people. When it comes to Georgia, you know, we're not evacuating for storm surge in Georgia. This is going to be high winds. So we're asking people to get within a facility that can withstand the winds, and try to shelter in place or seek out public shelters that may be open in southwest Georgia.

THE PRESIDENT: But if you look at the size -- how long it is. Take a look at that. And the red area basically is the area where it's going to hit pretty heavily. And that's a -- that's a lot of shore. That's a lot of land.

SECRETARY NIELSEN: Yes, sir. There will be four feet of storm surge all the way down to Tampa Bay -- which, as you know, is very low-lying and floods very easily. But to give you that idea of the breadth of its path. It is quite large.

THE PRESIDENT: It's almost the entire size of the Gulf. When you look at it, topically, it's almost the entire size of the Gulf. And they haven't seen that. Maybe they haven't seen that at all. Nobody has seen that before.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: The eye diameter is pretty wide, which unfortunately is not good news as it makes landfall. So some people may say it's similar to an EF3 tornado making landfall in areas that are close to the eye. So it's --

Q Did last year's hurricanes in the area impair the infrastructure or weaken it in any way that they would struggle to deal with this year's hurricane?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Not in this area. Irma did not really heavily impact the Florida Panhandle. Most of the hits from Irma was in the southwest portion of Florida, and then moved up through and created some issues in the Jacksonville area and the northeastern portion.

But this area has been a long time since it's been hit, so the vegetation hasn't been stressed. And we're going to see a lot of damage and devastation, unfortunately. And we have to set the citizens' expectations that the power is going to be out for a while. And what FEMA's role in that is, as the Secretary was saying, our partnership with the private sector is that we work with the Florida Power and Lights, the Gulf Powers, the southern companies -- the Georgia Powers, to be able to help them facilitate their mutual aid to come in.

And they've got power crews coming in from multiple states across the country that are already pre-staged. And when we're hit, we work with them to do what's called "first push debris" to get the roadways open and so that we can get them down the roadways to start fixing the power. But that's going to take some time.

Q Mr. President, do you plan on changing any of your travel schedule (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we don't know. I know was going to Pennsylvania. It looks like there are thousands of people already lined up, and probably will do that tonight. And we're going to go down here as soon as we can. We don't want to interfere with anybody, but we want to go as soon as possible.

You have -- you know, right nearby we have thousands of people going tonight, and they've already -- many are there already.

What time are we -- were you going to be there? What time are we landing on that?

Q The rally tonight is scheduled for 7 o'clock.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, it's about seven.

Q Are you going to go ahead (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't know what to do, because you have so many people already there, and it's sort of unfair to them. So it's a mix. I'll be totally focused on this. But we'll make a determination over the next little while. But you have people that --

Q Does it make it for difficult for you to pay attention to the storms --

THE PRESIDENT: No, because I have great people, including these two. But I have great people. And it wouldn't make any difference in that sense. But I would like to be seeing what's going on. We want to get down there as soon as possible.

At the same time, I don't want to go down where we're interfering with the people -- first responders, the FEMA people. I want them to focus on the storm, not me. So we'll probably look to Sunday or Monday to go down and meet with the governors, meet with everybody, and do what we have to do, like we did in North Carolina, South Carolina, where that worked out really well.

Now, they're going to get hit also. I mean, North Carolina and South Carolina are going to get a lot of water. Nothing like they had two weeks ago. But they're going to get a lot of water also, and that water is still draining out. So this is a pretty big problem. I really worry a little bit about South Carolina and North Carolina, from the standpoint they're already saturated, and they're going to get a reasonable hit. Right?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Right, yeah. They will, sir. You're going to see as much as eight -- you know, possibly eight inches in isolated areas through South Carolina and North Carolina. And as I said, it's all about the rivers being able to process the water from Florence. And some of them haven't had the time to do that, so this doesn't help.

Q President Trump, should Saudi Arabia release the journalist (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: I will have to take a look at it exactly. When you say release the journalist, who are you talking about?

Q They have imprisoned a journalist named (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: That I'd have to look into. I'm not familiar with it.

Q Can I ask you about Jamal Khashoggi?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Are you concerned that he's dead? And do you hold the Saudi government responsible?

THE PRESIDENT: I would be certainly concerned. In fact, we have a call in to his wife.

Q Do you think he's dead, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: His wife wrote us a letter, and addressed it to my wife and myself. And we're in contact with her now, and we want to bring her to the White House. It's a very sad situation. It's a very bad situation. And we want to get to the bottom of it.

Q Do you think he's dead, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't want to make -- I don't want to say that. I hope he's not. I hope he's not.

Q Would you hold the Saudi government responsible?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I have to find out who did it. But people saw him go in but they didn't see him come out, as they understand it. And we're going to take a very serious look at it. It's a terrible thing.

Q Have you spoken to the Saudis?

THE PRESIDENT: I'd rather not say. But the answer is yes. (Laughter.)

Q Can you give us a sense of when his wife, fiancée, might be coming to the White House, and your message to her?

THE PRESIDENT: I would say fairly quickly. I would say fairly quickly. They're in touch. You may speak to First Lady's folks because they're in touch, and she'll be most likely coming to the White House. We'll work on it together. It's a terrible thing.

Q Lindsey Graham says there will be hell to pay if the Saudis are, in fact, responsible. Do you share that view?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, Lindsey can speak for himself. But this is a bad situation. We cannot let this happen to reporters, to anybody. We can't let this happen. And we're going to get the bottom of it. Okay? But you may want to speak to the First Lady's office about it.

Q Mr. President, who did you talk to in the Saudi government?

THE PRESIDENT: I'd rather not say, but at a very high level. The highest level. Let me say this: It's the highest level.

Q (Inaudible) last couple days about this?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. And more than once.

Q You had mentioned that you spoke with King Salman. So, I mean, the highest level --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I do anyway. And I've always found him to be a fine man. We've had a very good relationship. I'm not happy about this. We have to see what happens. We have to see what happens. Nobody knows what happened yet. They don't know over there. But it's a very serious situation, and it's something we're taking very seriously. Okay?

Q Mr. President, several countries, like India and China, are planning to buy oil from Iran, even after the (inaudible). What is the message to those countries?

THE PRESIDENT: We'll take care of that. We'll take care of that.

Q There's a report out of Seoul today that the South Korean government is considering lifting some sanctions against -- the South Korean government is considering lifting --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, they won't do it without our approval. They do nothing without our approval.

Q Have they been in contact with you?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. They do nothing without our approval.

Q President Trump, do you plan to release more people like Alice Johnson?

THE PRESIDENT: We'll talk to you about that later.

Q Are you any closer to picking a replacement for Ambassador Haley?

THE PRESIDENT: And, by the way, when we get -- Alice Johnson is such a great person, such a great case. I'd like to find a lot of people like Alice Johnson. And there are a lot of people that are in a situation like that, and we are actively looking for those situations. She's a terrific woman. I've been watching her a lot. And what a great spokesman she is for that situation. And that's covering a lot of people. There are a lot of people like that that will unfortunately be locked up for many, many years. And there's no reason for it.

So we are looking for -- we are actively looking for other situations exactly like that.

Q Would you consider Dina Powell the frontrunner to U.N. Ambassador?

THE PRESIDENT: No, but she's somebody we're talking to. We like Dina. Dina did great here. She then went back into the private sector for a while, but she always wanted to come back. She loves this administration. So we're certainly looking at Dina, and we're looking at others. There's some tremendously talented people. Nikki is going to be here until the end of the year. Nikki is our friend. She's been great. I want whoever it is to spend some time with Nikki before Nikki goes out and gets herself a job, and hopefully does -- she's going to make a lot of money. And I think Nikki will come back in some form, too. But she's an extraordinary person, good person.

But we're looking at many people. Many people want that job.

Q Mr. President, any concern about the fact that she announced her departure before the midterms? Some here --

THE PRESIDENT: No, there's no good time. I mean, there will be no good time. She told me about this a long time ago. And, frankly, it's -- you know, almost four weeks. So it's not that bad. No, I don't think so at all. I thought it was very elegantly done.

If she waited until after, then they'd say, "Oh, she..." You know, if we win, they'd say, why is she doing it. And if we lose, they'd say, oh, well that's obvious why she's doing it. Okay? So there's really no good time to do it.

But she and I had spoke at least six months ago. Maybe even a year ago we had conversations. She wanted to be here about two years. And I think the point really was, last week at the United Nations, she wanted to get through that and then go probably into the private sector for a while. And I'm sure she's going to come back into government because she's a terrific person.

Q What's the vetting process like, Mr. President? What are you looking for in your next --

THE PRESIDENT: Very strong vetting. But some of the people we've already vetted. Some of the people are with us. We're looking at people that were already with us. And we have some incredible talent in this administration. We have some great, great talent. And they've already been vetted. They were already approved.

Any other questions on this?

Q Mr. President, one more question. Last week, India signed an agreement with Russia to purchase the S-400 missile defense system --

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, I know they did.

Q -- \$5.4 billion. Would CAATSA sanctions apply to India? Or are you planning to do (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: India is going to find out, aren't they?

Q Are you planning to give them a waiver?

THE PRESIDENT: India will find out.

Q When?

THE PRESIDENT: You'll see. Sooner than you think.

Q Can I ask another question on this? You talked a lot about the size and the scope of it. Can you help us understand just how big it's going to be? Florence was a historic storm. Is it going to be bigger than Florence? How should we think about the size and the magnitude?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Well, for this area of the Florida Panhandle, it's going to be historic. I mean, this is the worst hit that they've had in recent history. You know, it's Cat 4 going in. What else can -- what else can we say?

THE PRESIDENT: Very rare that you see a 4.

SECRETARY NIELSEN: That's about 150 miles per hour right now.

THE PRESIDENT: And these winds are -- you know --

SECRETARY NIELSEN: I mean, this is a very serious storm.

THE PRESIDENT: -- and much more in certain areas.

Q How many people are unable to evacuate? Is there an estimate?

THE PRESIDENT: Many. Many.

Q Like thousands?

THE PRESIDENT: You have poor people. It's very sad. And they are unable. More than we would like. More than we would like. And, you know, you have people that are stuck. They're just stuck there.

We're moving a lot of people out, but you have some people that don't want to go out. They own a home and they just don't want to go out. And you can't force them to go out.

But these are great people that -- I love this area. I love it. There's something about the people in the area. And they will be okay. They are strong, smart, wonderful people. But you have certain sections where, really, you have pretty extreme poverty; you don't have money. And it's very hard for those people. But we're moving a lot out.

Q Do you have a message for those who are in the storm's path that haven't evacuated?

THE PRESIDENT: I say, "God bless you all." That's my message -- because that's what it is. The storm is there. I mean, that storm is there. It's sort of too late to do anything about it now from the standpoint of moving.

Tell us about that. If somebody said -- they're watching this now, and they want to leave, it's --

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: The window to evacuate has come to a close. I mean, you know, once -- you know, in some cases --

THE PRESIDENT: (Inaudible.)

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: -- all these barrier islands, they have to shut down the drawbridges at certain sustained winds. And quite honestly, the ocean has already started rising in some of those areas where we're anticipating the storm surge.

And as I said earlier, the most important thing is, is that if you're in an area and you can't get out of that area, try to get elevated, and try to get into a facility that you think can withstand the winds.

Q Is there anything that you're doing for this storm differently than you did for hurricanes Maria or any of the other past hurricanes?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: You know what? We're putting the full force of the federal government and the firepower of the federal government down and pre-staging to be able to help our state partners. We don't treat --

THE PRESIDENT: But I do think we're trying to move people more here because of the winds. We're worried about the houses. You know, these houses weren't built for 180-mile-an-hour winds. You have wind gusts up to 185, they say. That's as bad as -- pretty much as bad as it can get. And these houses aren't built for that kind of destruction.

So I think more than anything else, we're trying to move more people out than we've ever before.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: I think what was different was Governor Scott leaning forward and using the wireless emergency alert. And I think that's the first time that it's actually been used in this platform, to my knowledge. And, you know, just trying to hammer home the --

SECRETARY NIELSEN: That was a great way to communicate with those barrier islands you see, using that alert system.

Q A lot of folks, I think, woke up and they were surprised when they saw Category 4. Were state and local officials, or was the federal government in any way caught off guard by the strength of this?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: FEMA was not, by any means, and neither was the state of Florida. You know, the bottom line is, is that any time we're dealing with a Gulf Coast storm, we always plan for one category, possibly two, higher -- because we understand that trying to forecast the intensity of these storms is very difficult for the National Hurricane Center to do. So, therefore, we always plan one or two categories higher than what's actually forecast days in advance, because we know that the window to actually move people into position and get ready shuts pretty quickly in Gulf Coast storms because of the (inaudible).

SECRETARY NIELSEN: This is why we have National Hurricane season, right? I mean, the whole season we encourage everybody to be prepared, have your kits, know how you'll communicate with your family, know your evacuation route. Because sometimes they increase in intensity so quickly. If you're thinking about it then for the first time, you're not going to be safe. So that's why we have the season. During that whole season, you should be prepared for a hurricane.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, this was projected to be a storm three days ago, not a hurricane. And it grew, and it grew as rapidly as anything they've ever seen. That's the problem. And we're very, very prepared. We have massive amounts of food and water that gets brought in immediately as it's leaving. I mean, literally, we follow it right in.

And the electrical folks and, you know, the different electrical companies, they have thousands -- they're going to have over 10,000 people, and they're literally waiting, and they go and follow it in. They have to clear out the streets. But they literally follow it right in.

So that's going to be okay. I mean, the thing we're worried about is that initial -- the wind. Because supposedly, if you believe everything you're seeing not only from our people, if you see it on television, they haven't seen winds like this. So this is different than a lot of water, which is bad too. But they have not seen winds like this in a long time.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Yep, you can replace all the infrastructures.

THE PRESIDENT: Some of it they had almost 200 miles an hour, and I've never even heard of that before. I've never heard of it. It's almost like a big -- it's like a big tornado, a massive tornado. So we have to be very careful, and we just hope the structures can hold up. And if they can't, we hope people aren't in those structures; that they were able to get out.

Well, thank you all very much. We appreciate you very much.

Q Can I ask one more on Khashoggi? Do you have a message to the Saudi government? Are you demanding information?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, we are. We're demanding everything. And we want to see what's going on here. That's a bad situation. And, frankly, the fact that it's a reporter, you could say, in many respects, it makes it -- it brings it to a level.

It's a very serious situation for us and for this White House. We do not like seeing what's going on. Now, as you know, they're saying we had nothing to do with it. But so far, everyone is saying they had nothing to do with it. And it's inside of Turkey. And the Turkish government is working very strongly so far, so we'll see what happens.

Q Sounds like you don't buy their denials.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I want to see what happens. And we're working very closely with Turkey, and I think we'll get to the bottom of it.

Thank you all very much.

END 12:32 P.M. EDT

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 10, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
IN BRIEFING WITH DHS SECRETARY KIRSTJEN NIELSEN
AND FEMA ADMINISTRATOR BROCK LONG
ON HURRICANE MICHAEL

Oval Office

12:12 P.M. EDT

SECRETARY NIELSEN: All right, so I wanted to update you on Hurricane Michael. It's about 40 miles off the coast. It's starting to feel the effects now. It is a very dangerous Category 4. Just to remind the press, Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria were Cat fours. So these are big storms that we're looking at.

So it'll hit the Panhandle, as you can see on this one right here, sir. And then it will go through Georgia and the Carolinas. Unfortunately, on the tail end, we do expect additional rain in the Carolinas, which could lead to additional flooding.

FEMA is leaning forward, as we are with our interagency partners. We're forward deployed. We have search and rescue ready to go. We're in very close contact with state and local authorities. We've all spoken with the governor and local officials.

And I'll turn it over to Brock to give additional details.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Thank you, Secretary. Unfortunately, this is a Gulf Coast hurricane of the worst kind because all of the elements associated with hurricanes come into play.

So, as you see on the left, the storm surge estimates are anywhere between 9 and 14 feet. The storm surge is going to be the worst where the eye makes landfall -- just to the east or south of where the eye makes landfall. Somewhere right now, it's projected between Panama City, Apalachicola, and then it's going to push forward.

So not only is it going to bring 14 feet of ocean water and coastal flood inundation, there will be wave action on top of that, which is the primary driver of why we evacuate, sir.

And then, coupled with that, you've got over-145-mile-per-hour winds. You know, structures built before 2001 are not designed to handle that type of wind, typically.

And it's going to, unfortunately, push through the states. So we're asking citizens in southwest Georgia, central Georgia to be vigilant and to make sure that they understand what's about to come -- because this area is going to see a Cat 1, Cat 2 storm as it moves inland. And with the vegetation there, what we're anticipating is a lot of downed trees impacting the power grid.

And here, again, we're going to see a lot of devastation along the coast, structurally. And then, as it moves in, you're going to see power outages throughout the state.

And then, unfortunately, you're going to see rainfall into South Carolina and North Carolina. The Cape Fear was projected to start receding from Hurricane Florence two days ago, and this will basically exacerbate the problem and add to it a little bit, to where it's going to keep those waters from receding a little bit as it exits the state by Friday.

THE PRESIDENT: So they're reporting that this is one of the most powerful hurricanes ever to hit our country. Is that actually a fact?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Well, you know, so in this area, this would be the most intense hurricane that has struck this area since 1851, if I remember correctly. So --

THE PRESIDENT: A long time.

SECRETARY NIELSEN: This is a big storm.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Yes. Intense. Very intense. But --

THE PRESIDENT: And this one is going to heavy rain or is it going to be the winds that are going to be the problem?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Storm surge and winds. And then for Georgia, they're going to see high inland winds, so you may see sustained Category 1, Category 2 winds with higher gusts that are associated.

So we're expecting a lot of damage inland as well. But we have leaned forward with Governor Scott and his staff, and Director Wes Maul down in Florida. They've been leaning forward as well.

And right now, there's no identified shortfalls when it comes to pre-positioning. So we have teams, equipment, personnel not only with and embedded with state-of-Florida staff and some of the local county emergency managers. But we have equipment teams staged in Maxwell, to Atlanta, to Orlando ready to move in once we can -- once the elements subside and push through, and then we can move in and attack.

SECRETARY NIELSEN: And we're working really closely with the private sector. So they've got 14 states -- different utilities from 14 states are already ready to --

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, (inaudible).

SECRETARY NIELSEN: -- are ready to help with any energy outages.

THE PRESIDENT: Electric companies are from all over the country, actually. They're all lined up. As soon as it goes by, they're going to be working. And we've got food supplies, food chains. We're working with all of the states.

And let me ask you: This started out very innocently a week ago. This was a small storm in an area they never thought. They said it grew into a monster.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Right. So the first initial indications from the National Hurricane Center started coming in around Saturday. And they picked it up and started raising the flag that, "Hey, this system is going to go from a wave to a depression, and it could potentially rapidly intensify." And unfortunately, that's typical of the Gulf Coast.

And when they do this, those citizens have less time to prepare or heed the warnings. We are concerned that many citizens chose not to heed those warnings, but we're prepared with search and rescue teams to try to go in and do what we can.

THE PRESIDENT: Any questions for us?

Q Yes. Are you concerned that the folks in Florida and Georgia in the storm's path aren't prepared enough and that there aren't enough evacuations, to follow up on that point?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Yesterday, we were concerned that we were not -- we did not like the level of evacuation activity that we were seeing. And, you know, Governor Scott -- kudos to him. He leaned forward, used the new wireless emergency alert capabilities that we have, and sent out a text -- you know, text messaging last night. Leaned forward and said, "Hey, get out of there."

And so we were trying to get people to really take the storm seriously. A lot of people did heed the warning, but then there are those who chose to stay behind. And unfortunately, first responders may not be able to go in and rescue those who dial 911 at this point.

Q Mr. President, can you give us a sense of the officials you've been in contact with? Have you spoken to the governor?

THE PRESIDENT: I have. I have. And the other governors, depending on what happens here -- but they are all either contacted or are in the process. I had a long talk with Rick Scott -- Governor Scott, of Florida. Very well coordinated with all of the states.

And, you know, one of the things that must be said is it's not so easy for some of these people to leave. Some of the areas are very poor. It's not easy for a person without the necessary money to leave. So what we've done is we've sent buses. We've sent a lot of different -- we're doing a lot of different things to try and remove people from the area. But a lot of people are very poor in certain of those areas, and it's very tough for them to leave. That's one of the problems you're finding, I guess, huh?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Yeah. In some cases, what we asked to do on blue-sky days is ask people, who may not have the means or the mechanisms to get out of town, to register with their local emergency management agencies -- and Florida has been pretty robust in doing that -- so that we have some idea of how to pre-plan for that.

And then we do what we can to be able to support the movement of people. When it comes to Georgia, you know, we're not evacuating for storm surge in Georgia. This is going to be high winds. So we're asking people to get within a facility that can withstand the winds, and try to shelter in place or seek out public shelters that may be open in southwest Georgia.

THE PRESIDENT: But if you look at the size -- how long it is. Take a look at that. And the red area basically is the area where it's going to hit pretty heavily. And that's a -- that's a lot of shore. That's a lot of land.

SECRETARY NIELSEN: Yes, sir. There will be four feet of storm surge all the way down to Tampa Bay -- which, as you know, is very low-lying and floods very easily. But to give you that idea of the breadth of its path. It is quite large.

THE PRESIDENT: It's almost the entire size of the Gulf. When you look at it, topically, it's almost the entire size of the Gulf. And they haven't seen that. Maybe they haven't seen that at all. Nobody has seen that before.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: The eye diameter is pretty wide, which unfortunately is not good news as it makes landfall. So some people may say it's similar to an EF3 tornado making landfall in areas that are close to the eye. So it's --

Q Did last year's hurricanes in the area impair the infrastructure or weaken it in any way that they would struggle to deal with this year's hurricane?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Not in this area. Irma did not really heavily impact the Florida Panhandle. Most of the hits from Irma was in the southwest portion of Florida, and then moved up through and created some issues in the Jacksonville area and the northeastern portion.

But this area has been a long time since it's been hit, so the vegetation hasn't been stressed. And we're going to see a lot of damage and devastation, unfortunately. And we have to set the citizens' expectations that the power is going to be out for a while. And what FEMA's role in that is, as the Secretary was saying, our partnership with the private sector is that we work with the Florida Power and Lights, the Gulf Powers, the southern companies -- the Georgia Powers, to be able to help them facilitate their mutual aid to come in.

And they've got power crews coming in from multiple states across the country that are already pre-staged. And when we're hit, we work with them to do what's called "first push debris" to get the roadways open and so that we can get them down the roadways to start fixing the power. But that's going to take some time.

Q Mr. President, do you plan on changing any of your travel schedule (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we don't know. I know was going to Pennsylvania. It looks like there are thousands of people already lined up, and probably will do that tonight. And we're going to go down here as soon as we can. We don't want to interfere with anybody, but we want to go as soon as possible.

You have -- you know, right nearby we have thousands of people going tonight, and they've already -- many are there already.

What time are we -- were you going to be there? What time are we landing on that?

Q The rally tonight is scheduled for 7 o'clock.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, it's about seven.

Q Are you going to go ahead (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't know what to do, because you have so many people already there, and it's sort of unfair to them. So it's a mix. I'll be totally focused on this. But we'll make a determination over the next little while. But you have people that --

Q Does it make it for difficult for you to pay attention to the storms --

THE PRESIDENT: No, because I have great people, including these two. But I have great people. And it wouldn't make any difference in that sense. But I would like to be seeing what's going on. We want to get down there as soon as possible.

At the same time, I don't want to go down where we're interfering with the people -- first responders, the FEMA people. I want them to focus on the storm, not me. So we'll probably look to Sunday or Monday to go down and meet with the governors, meet with everybody, and do what we have to do, like we did in North Carolina, South Carolina, where that worked out really well.

Now, they're going to get hit also. I mean, North Carolina and South Carolina are going to get a lot of water. Nothing like they had two weeks ago. But they're going to get a lot of water also, and that water is still draining out. So this is a pretty big problem. I really worry a little bit about South Carolina and North Carolina, from the standpoint they're already saturated, and they're going to get a reasonable hit. Right?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Right, yeah. They will, sir. You're going to see as much as eight -- you know, possibly eight inches in isolated areas through South Carolina and North Carolina. And as I said, it's all about the rivers being able to process the water from Florence. And some of them haven't had the time to do that, so this doesn't help.

Q President Trump, should Saudi Arabia release the journalist (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: I will have to take a look at it exactly. When you say release the journalist, who are you talking about?

Q They have imprisoned a journalist named (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: That I'd have to look into. I'm not familiar with it.

Q Can I ask you about Jamal Khashoggi?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Are you concerned that he's dead? And do you hold the Saudi government responsible?

THE PRESIDENT: I would be certainly concerned. In fact, we have a call in to his wife.

Q Do you think he's dead, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: His wife wrote us a letter, and addressed it to my wife and myself. And we're in contact with her now, and we want to bring her to the White House. It's a very sad situation. It's a very bad situation. And we want to get to the bottom of it.

Q Do you think he's dead, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't want to make -- I don't want to say that. I hope he's not. I hope he's not.

Q Would you hold the Saudi government responsible?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I have to find out who did it. But people saw him go in but they didn't see him come out, as they understand it. And we're going to take a very serious look at it. It's a terrible thing.

Q Have you spoken to the Saudis?

THE PRESIDENT: I'd rather not say. But the answer is yes. (Laughter.)

Q Can you give us a sense of when his wife, fiancée, might be coming to the White House, and your message to her?

THE PRESIDENT: I would say fairly quickly. I would say fairly quickly. They're in touch. You may speak to First Lady's folks because they're in touch, and she'll be most likely coming to the White House. We'll work on it together. It's a terrible thing.

Q Lindsey Graham says there will be hell to pay if the Saudis are, in fact, responsible. Do you share that view?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, Lindsey can speak for himself. But this is a bad situation. We cannot let this happen to reporters, to anybody. We can't let this happen. And we're going to get the bottom of it. Okay? But you may want to speak to the First Lady's office about it.

Q Mr. President, who did you talk to in the Saudi government?

THE PRESIDENT: I'd rather not say, but at a very high level. The highest level. Let me say this: It's the highest level.

Q (Inaudible) last couple days about this?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. And more than once.

Q You had mentioned that you spoke with King Salman. So, I mean, the highest level --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I do anyway. And I've always found him to be a fine man. We've had a very good relationship. I'm not happy about this. We have to see what happens. We have to see what happens. Nobody knows what happened yet. They don't know over there. But it's a very serious situation, and it's something we're taking very seriously. Okay?

Q Mr. President, several countries, like India and China, are planning to buy oil from Iran, even after the (inaudible). What is the message to those countries?

THE PRESIDENT: We'll take care of that. We'll take care of that.

Q There's a report out of Seoul today that the South Korean government is considering lifting some sanctions against -- the South Korean government is considering lifting --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, they won't do it without our approval. They do nothing without our approval.

Q Have they been in contact with you?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. They do nothing without our approval.

Q President Trump, do you plan to release more people like Alice Johnson?

THE PRESIDENT: We'll talk to you about that later.

Q Are you any closer to picking a replacement for Ambassador Haley?

THE PRESIDENT: And, by the way, when we get -- Alice Johnson is such a great person, such a great case. I'd like to find a lot of people like Alice Johnson. And there are a lot of people that are in a situation like that, and we are actively looking for those situations. She's a terrific woman. I've been watching her a lot. And what a great spokesman she is for that situation. And that's covering a lot of people. There are a lot of people like that that will unfortunately be locked up for many, many years. And there's no reason for it.

So we are looking for -- we are actively looking for other situations exactly like that.

Q Would you consider Dina Powell the frontrunner to U.N. Ambassador?

THE PRESIDENT: No, but she's somebody we're talking to. We like Dina. Dina did great here. She then went back into the private sector for a while, but she always wanted to come back. She loves this administration. So we're certainly looking at Dina, and we're looking at others. There's some tremendously talented people. Nikki is going to be here until the end of the year. Nikki is our friend. She's been great. I want whoever it is to spend some time with Nikki before Nikki goes out and gets herself a job, and hopefully does -- she's going to make a lot of money. And I think Nikki will come back in some form, too. But she's an extraordinary person, good person.

But we're looking at many people. Many people want that job.

Q Mr. President, any concern about the fact that she announced her departure before the midterms? Some here --

THE PRESIDENT: No, there's no good time. I mean, there will be no good time. She told me about this a long time ago. And, frankly, it's -- you know, almost four weeks. So it's not that bad. No, I don't think so at all. I thought it was very elegantly done.

If she waited until after, then they'd say, "Oh, she..." You know, if we win, they'd say, why is she doing it. And if we lose, they'd say, oh, well that's obvious why she's doing it. Okay? So there's really no good time to do it.

But she and I had spoke at least six months ago. Maybe even a year ago we had conversations. She wanted to be here about two years. And I think the point really was, last week at the United Nations, she wanted to get through that and then go probably into the private sector for a while. And I'm sure she's going to come back into government because she's a terrific person.

Q What's the vetting process like, Mr. President? What are you looking for in your next --

THE PRESIDENT: Very strong vetting. But some of the people we've already vetted. Some of the people are with us. We're looking at people that were already with us. And we have some incredible talent in this administration. We have some great, great talent. And they've already been vetted. They were already approved.

Any other questions on this?

Q Mr. President, one more question. Last week, India signed an agreement with Russia to purchase the S-400 missile defense system --

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, I know they did.

Q -- \$5.4 billion. Would CAATSA sanctions apply to India? Or are you planning to do (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: India is going to find out, aren't they?

Q Are you planning to give them a waiver?

THE PRESIDENT: India will find out.

Q When?

THE PRESIDENT: You'll see. Sooner than you think.

Q Can I ask another question on this? You talked a lot about the size and the scope of it. Can you help us understand just how big it's going to be? Florence was a historic storm. Is it going to be bigger than Florence? How should we think about the size and the magnitude?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Well, for this area of the Florida Panhandle, it's going to be historic. I mean, this is the worst hit that they've had in recent history. You know, it's Cat 4 going in. What else can -- what else can we say?

THE PRESIDENT: Very rare that you see a 4.

SECRETARY NIELSEN: That's about 150 miles per hour right now.

THE PRESIDENT: And these winds are -- you know --

SECRETARY NIELSEN: I mean, this is a very serious storm.

THE PRESIDENT: -- and much more in certain areas.

Q How many people are unable to evacuate? Is there an estimate?

THE PRESIDENT: Many. Many.

Q Like thousands?

THE PRESIDENT: You have poor people. It's very sad. And they are unable. More than we would like. More than we would like. And, you know, you have people that are stuck. They're just stuck there.

We're moving a lot of people out, but you have some people that don't want to go out. They own a home and they just don't want to go out. And you can't force them to go out.

But these are great people that -- I love this area. I love it. There's something about the people in the area. And they will be okay. They are strong, smart, wonderful people. But you have certain sections where, really, you have pretty extreme poverty; you don't have money. And it's very hard for those people. But we're moving a lot out.

Q Do you have a message for those who are in the storm's path that haven't evacuated?

THE PRESIDENT: I say, "God bless you all." That's my message -- because that's what it is. The storm is there. I mean, that storm is there. It's sort of too late to do anything about it now from the standpoint of moving.

Tell us about that. If somebody said -- they're watching this now, and they want to leave, it's --

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: The window to evacuate has come to a close. I mean, you know, once -- you know, in some cases --

THE PRESIDENT: (Inaudible.)

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: -- all these barrier islands, they have to shut down the drawbridges at certain sustained winds. And quite honestly, the ocean has already started rising in some of those areas where we're anticipating the storm surge.

And as I said earlier, the most important thing is, is that if you're in an area and you can't get out of that area, try to get elevated, and try to get into a facility that you think can withstand the winds.

Q Is there anything that you're doing for this storm differently than you did for hurricanes Maria or any of the other past hurricanes?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: You know what? We're putting the full force of the federal government and the firepower of the federal government down and pre-staging to be able to help our state partners. We don't treat --

THE PRESIDENT: But I do think we're trying to move people more here because of the winds. We're worried about the houses. You know, these houses weren't built for 180-mile-an-hour winds. You have wind gusts up to 185, they say. That's as bad as -- pretty much as bad as it can get. And these houses aren't built for that kind of destruction.

So I think more than anything else, we're trying to move more people out than we've ever before.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: I think what was different was Governor Scott leaning forward and using the wireless emergency alert. And I think that's the first time that it's actually been used in this platform, to my knowledge. And, you know, just trying to hammer home the --

SECRETARY NIELSEN: That was a great way to communicate with those barrier islands you see, using that alert system.

Q A lot of folks, I think, woke up and they were surprised when they saw Category 4. Were state and local officials, or was the federal government in any way caught off guard by the strength of this?

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: FEMA was not, by any means, and neither was the state of Florida. You know, the bottom line is, is that any time we're dealing with a Gulf Coast storm, we always plan for one category, possibly two, higher -- because we understand that trying to forecast the intensity of these storms is very difficult for the National Hurricane Center to do. So, therefore, we always plan one or two categories higher than what's actually forecast days in advance, because we know that the window to actually move people into position and get ready shuts pretty quickly in Gulf Coast storms because of the (inaudible).

SECRETARY NIELSEN: This is why we have National Hurricane season, right? I mean, the whole season we encourage everybody to be prepared, have your kits, know how you'll communicate with your family, know your evacuation route. Because sometimes they increase in intensity so quickly. If you're thinking about it then for the first time, you're not going to be safe. So that's why we have the season. During that whole season, you should be prepared for a hurricane.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, this was projected to be a storm three days ago, not a hurricane. And it grew, and it grew as rapidly as anything they've ever seen. That's the problem. And we're very, very prepared. We have massive amounts of food and water that gets brought in immediately as it's leaving. I mean, literally, we follow it right in.

And the electrical folks and, you know, the different electrical companies, they have thousands -- they're going to have over 10,000 people, and they're literally waiting, and they go and follow it in. They have to clear out the streets. But they literally follow it right in.

So that's going to be okay. I mean, the thing we're worried about is that initial -- the wind. Because supposedly, if you believe everything you're seeing not only from our people, if you see it on television, they haven't seen winds like this. So this is different than a lot of water, which is bad too. But they have not seen winds like this in a long time.

ADMINISTRATOR LONG: Yep, you can replace all the infrastructures.

THE PRESIDENT: Some of it they had almost 200 miles an hour, and I've never even heard of that before. I've never heard of it. It's almost like a big -- it's like a big tornado, a massive tornado. So we have to be very careful, and we just hope the structures can hold up. And if they can't, we hope people aren't in those structures; that they were able to get out.

Well, thank you all very much. We appreciate you very much.

Q Can I ask one more on Khashoggi? Do you have a message to the Saudi government? Are you demanding information?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, we are. We're demanding everything. And we want to see what's going on here. That's a bad situation. And, frankly, the fact that it's a reporter, you could say, in many respects, it makes it -- it brings it to a level.

It's a very serious situation for us and for this White House. We do not like seeing what's going on. Now, as you know, they're saying we had nothing to do with it. But so far, everyone is saying they had nothing to do with it. And it's inside of Turkey. And the Turkish government is working very strongly so far, so we'll see what happens.

Q Sounds like you don't buy their denials.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I want to see what happens. And we're working very closely with Turkey, and I think we'll get to the bottom of it.

Thank you all very much.

END 12:32 P.M. EDT

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release October 12, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
IN MEETING WITH PASTOR ANDREW BRUNSON

Oval Office

2:41 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you very much, everybody. This has been a long journey. But for Andrew, it's been a very interesting day. Because as you probably heard, I said a little bit earlier, from a Turkish prison to the White House in 24 hours. That's not bad. (Applause.) Actually --

And I want to start by saying that Norine was unbelievable. She was calling and calling. She definitely loves you -- let me put it that way. (Laughter.) But she was calling and she wanted you out.

PASTOR BRUNSON: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: And she was not playing games. Right? And we're very proud of you, Norine. Thank you very much.

And you are very, very special to all of us. And, you know, we have some of our great leaders right here. You know James. You know Cindy. You know Richard. You know Thom. You know Patrick. You know Mark. And all of these people, and right back here. A whole group of people. They fought so hard for you. They wanted you out.

And again, we've been negotiating long and hard. We do not pay ransom in this country, at least any longer. We won't pay ransom. Otherwise you have big problems, and lots of things will happen. Lots of bad things will happen.

But I still -- I want to thank President Erdogan. We've been dealing. And we actually -- until this, we had a very good relationship. I was actually very surprised that we didn't work this out a couple of months ago. But it started in a different administration, and they were not going to work out anything. And we took it over, we inherited it. And we have, I think at this moment, gotten 19 different people out of various countries that were being held.

Chairman Kim was really great to us. I think that started the relationship that we have now in North Korea, with three hostages, as you know. Egypt -- we had Aya. Aya was, they said, a spy. She was sentenced to 25 years. They told President Obama, "We will not let her out under any circumstances." And they told me, "She'll be in the Oval Office in 24 hours." We all know that. You guys worked on that one too. And many others. Many others.

So I just want to congratulate you, because you have galvanized this country. I mean, you just take a look this -- there's so much interest. And it's your faith, it's your strength, what you've gone through. I know what you've gone through. And I also know that, a period of time ago, we were able to get you from prison to the house.

And again, I do have to say, it's not an easy situation for Turkey either. They had a lot of difficult situations going on, and I do want to thank President Erdogan for making this possible. You understand what I mean by that.

PASTOR BRUNSON: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: It wasn't easy. And wasn't easy for him.

Most importantly, I want to congratulate you and your family. I'd love to -- say a few words. You may want to thank all of these great leaders, because they were really calling me a lot. (Laughter.) They called me too much. I said, "Okay, I know, we're working on it." Right? But they are terrific fans of yours. And right now, the whole world is a fan of yours. The whole world is your fan and your family's fan.

So maybe you can say a few words. Introduce your family. And it's a great honor to have you back home.

PASTOR BRUNSON: Thank you, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

PASTOR BRUNSON: This is my daughter Jacqueline, my son Blaise. Jacqueline's husband, Kevin. And my oldest son, Jordan. And this is Neil, who's Norine's brother. Of course, Norine is my wife.

THE PRESIDENT: That's for sure. (Laughter.)

PASTOR BRUNSON: And we especially want to thank the administration. You really fought for us, unusually so. From the time you took office, I know that you've been engaged, and Secretary of State Pompeo also was very engaged and fought for us. And Vice President Pence, we're very grateful. Mr. Bolton.

There are a number of people in the Senate. And I can't mention everyone, but I know that Senator Tillis visited me in prison, and so did Senator Shaheen and Senator Graham. And Senator Lankford has been involved from the very beginning.

So, we're so grateful to so many people in the Congress who stood with us and who prayed for us, and who fought for us.

So we want to thank you all very much.

THE PRESIDENT: And I do have to say we did leave out many people in the Senate, many people in the House. You know that, Patrick. Many people have been left out. And we just can't go through all of the names, but it was everybody that wanted this to happen. It was really everybody. The complete Senate. I think we can probably say, Richard, this was bipartisan. Do you agree?

SENATOR BURR: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: This wasn't just Republican, right? But honestly, I think if there was ever a bipartisan event, this was it.

And I do have to thank Vice President Pence. He's doing a terrific job. He felt very, very strongly about this. And Secretary of State Pompeo, I would say we spoke about this at least once a day.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: We thought we had it done two months ago. Sometimes it doesn't always work out, but that's -- I can only tell you that's better than anybody else could have done. And we are so honored to have you.

And anything final you'd like to say? And then you're going to go and relax and go home, and celebrate, and have a great life, right? I won't ask you whether or not you're going back to Turkey. (Laughter.) I won't ask that question.

PASTOR BRUNSON: We do love Turkey. We were there for 25 years, and we love the Turkish people.

THE PRESIDENT: Great. That's very nice.

MRS. BRUNSON: We pray for their (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: That's very nice.

MRS. BRUNSON: That's sincere. It's very sincere.

THE PRESIDENT: That's very nice. And I know you do love the Turkish people. They're great people. I know that. They're great people.

PASTOR BRUNSON: We would like to pray for you. We pray for you often as a family. My wife and I pray for you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well, I need it probably more than anybody in this room. (Laughter.) So I would -- that would be very nice. Thank you.

PASTOR BRUNSON: Can we pray for you now?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Thank you very much.

(Pastor Brunson and Mrs. Brunson give a prayer.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Could I ask you one question? Who did you vote for? (Laughter.)

MRS. BRUNSON: You.

THE PRESIDENT: I knew the answer. I knew the answer.

PASTOR BRUNSON: I would like to say I sent in an absentee ballot from prison. (Laughter and applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: It's a little unfair. I knew the answer. I would never do that to myself. That could be too tough. Listen, congratulations.

MRS. BRUNSON: Thank you so much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Great parents. And fantastic children. They were so with you.

PASTOR BRUNSON: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: And it is an honor. Well done.

PASTOR BRUNSON: Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. We appreciate. Thank you.

And again, to President Erdogan, thank you very much. To the people of Turkey, thank you very much. I think this will be a big step in our relationship. We have had a very harsh relationship over the past number of months because of what was happening. And I'm not going to blame fault. I'm not going to say anything. I'm just saying this is a tremendous step toward having the kind of relationship with Turkey -- which can be a great relationship -- that I know we're going to have.

So thank you very much. And, President, thank you very much.

Does anybody have any questions? Would you like to have --

Q Pastor Brunson, can you tell us a little bit about what your next plans are? What do you plan on doing now that you're back safely?

PASTOR BRUNSON: We want to spend time with our children especially, and then take some time to pray and see what God wants for the next part of our lives.

Q Would you be willing to discuss what your treatment was like while you were over there? What was your experience in general while you were detained?

PASTOR BRUNSON: I think we'll do that in the future. We will probably be doing some interviews. Right now, we just want to especially -- this is a time to thank the administration and people in government who supported us. And that's especially what we want to emphasize, is our gratefulness, to say we love this country.

Last night, we arrived in Germany on a plane that President Trump sent to take us from Turkey. And the Ambassador to Germany met us there at 1:30 in the morning. I couldn't believe it. And he had an American flag to give us that had flown over there and was in Berlin. And I took it and I very naturally just -- I kissed it. I love this country, and we pray for this country.

Phil?

Q Mr. President, I have a question for you, sir. What do you owe the timing of Pastor Brunson's release? And do you think the disappearance and possible murder of Jamal Khashoggi has anything to do with the timing of this?

THE PRESIDENT: The timing is a strict coincidence; it really is. It's -- I've heard a couple of people say, wow, that's pretty tricky; could there be anything to it. No. Actually, Phil, no. It's a total coincidence. It's interesting. A lot of things happening in a certain part of the world. You know that. You know what else is going on. But there are probably things beyond that. But, no, it's a strict coincidence, Phil.

Q And I know we're here to celebrate Pastor Brunson. But if I could just follow up on something you said on "60 Minutes."

THE PRESIDENT: I have a feeling know what it's going to be.

Q Well, you suggested, sir, that there could be serious repercussions --

THE PRESIDENT: That's right.

Q -- for Saudi Arabia, if the U.S. determines that they killed Jamal Khashoggi. What do have in mind? What sort of -

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we'll be sitting together with all of the folks here, and a lot more. And we'll have to make a determination. I do think this: That I worked very hard to get the order for the military. It's \$110 billion. I believe it's the largest order ever made. It's 450,000 jobs. It's the best equipment in the world. But if they don't buy it from us, they're going to buy it from Russia or they're going to buy it from China, or they're going to buy it from other countries.

But Russia and China wanted it very badly. I got 100 percent -- almost 100 percent of their order. And I would -- from the standpoint of jobs, economic development, a lot of other reasons, I would like to do something where we could maybe look at other things -- I will tell the senators -- because that's a tremendous order for our companies. It's a tremendous order for -- really, from an economic development standpoint. You look at -- Texas has a big chunk of it. Almost all of our states are involved in that order.

So I actually think we'd be punishing ourselves if we did that. There are other things we can do that are very, very powerful, very strong. And we'll do that.

Now, as of this moment, nobody knows what happened. As of this moment. We're looking into it very seriously. Turkey is looking into it at a very high level -- at the highest level. And so is Saudi Arabia. I mean, they're going to get back, and they have been getting back. And I know Mike has been dealing with them. John has been dealing with them.

But in terms of the order of \$110 billion -- think of that -- \$110 billion -- all they're going to do is give it to other countries. And I think that would be very foolish for our country. But there are other things we can do that will be very severe.

Q What's an example of something you could do?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there are many things we can do. Would you like to speak up about that? James, do you have any suggestions? There are many, many things. I don't know if you want to -- you know, I don't want to put you on the spot, but if you guys would like to tell them some of the many things we can do. There's a big list.

SENATOR LANKFORD: Yeah, there's a big list. Obviously, we have a longstanding partnership with Saudi Arabia in a lot of areas. My first preference though is not talk about what we would do. Let's find out what did happen first.

THE PRESIDENT: That's a very good idea.

SENATOR LANKFORD: And I think the key thing is, he's still -- his fiancée is still waiting to be able to find out what happens. And there's a lot of speculation. But until we know, I hate to take the next step on it, and just to be able to see.

Q Mr. President, would you meet with the family in the Oval Office?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I would. In fact, we've invited his fiancée. We've invited her. So -- she actually wrote a letter to myself and the First Lady. And -- beautiful letter. And we have invited her, and I believe they're working it out, where she'll be coming. I mean, I'd love to have her. Great news, where it wouldn't even be necessary. But at this point, it's looking like -- it's looking like he perhaps won't be or isn't around. And that's very sad. I think we would have known by now. That was our first hope; our first hope was that he was not killed. But maybe that's not looking -- it's not looking too good, right? From what we're hearing.

SENATOR LANKFORD: A lot still to learn, I think, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: But there's a lot to learn. There really is. Okay?

Q Mr. President, what about the others imprisoned in Turkey? The other U.S. citizens -- three employees of U.S. consulates in Turkey. What efforts are being made to --

THE PRESIDENT: We're working -- as you speak, we are working on that. And, by the way, other people that are in prisons in other countries, other than Turkey -- we have other people that have been there for many years. We've done very well. We actually have at least 18. And the 18 were people that they said would never, ever be freed. And, by the way, Pastor Brunson was one of them. We were talking before. How many years was it? You can say the number you told me. It's a very scary number.

PASTOR BRUNSON: Well, they wanted 35 years.

THE PRESIDENT: They wanted him in jail for 35 years.

So, you know, we have many people throughout the world, in other countries, and we are working very hard. This group -- all of this group -- we're working very hard to take care of that situation.

Q Mr. President, is there a red line in terms of Saudi behavior that would cause you to reconsider that proposed arms sales?

THE PRESIDENT: We're going to just see what happened. We have to see what happened. As James said, it's really best to -- let's determine what happened first. There's plenty of things we can do that are very tough. Let's see what happened first.

Q Have you seen the video or audio recordings?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not. Have you seen the video?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Mr. President, I have not seen it.

THE PRESIDENT: I mean, I've heard -- we've all heard a lot about the audio. Nobody has seen it yet. So we do want to see it. I guess it's a combination of seeing it and hearing it. And maybe a lot can be --

Q And have you asked (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we're going to be seeing it very soon.

Q Have you spoken (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't. I haven't spoken.

Q Do you plan on it?

THE PRESIDENT: I mean, I've spoken to him many times about this, but I haven't called him yet. I will be. I will be. And I will be also calling King Salman of Saudi Arabia, because I think it's appropriate for me to ask him what is going on.

Q Do you have any idea when that call might take place, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Probably tonight or tomorrow.

Go ahead.

Q Pastor Brunson, do you plan to stay in the U.S. now?

PASTOR BRUNSON: For a time. We don't know what's ahead of us.

I would like to say something. Someone asked before about other American prisoners in Turkey. And I know that from dealing with the consulate there -- and they've been very involved with us, excellent consulate staff there; and Martin Thomen is here -- that they weren't only engaging for me; that they're engaging for everyone there.

So, as -- I know this just from talking with the consulate staff when they would come to visit me in prison that they were involved very much in advocating for the other prisoners there.

THE PRESIDENT: And I have to say, with respect to Turkey or Saudi Arabia, when you look at what's going on in Iran and other places, it's really bad. It is really bad. There are a lot of bad things going on in that part of the world. And frankly, in other parts of the world also.

Any other questions?

Q Mr. President, what did you do different than other administrations? You talked about the 19 people that you've seen -- Americans held abroad that you've seen released. What did you do differently than previous administrations?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, they're tending not to take them --

Q And you said you made no deals, so --

THE PRESIDENT: They are tending not to take them out of our administration. And that's good. I like that. And I think I could tell you why, but I won't.

But they tend not to take them out of our administration. And you know what? It's going to stay that way, okay?

Q Mr. President, did you (inaudible) last night?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Did you watch the interview with the First Lady on ABC last night?

THE PRESIDENT: I did.

Q What did you think?

THE PRESIDENT: I thought she was fantastic. I thought the First Lady was fantastic last night. I hope I do as well on "60 Minutes" tomorrow night. (Laughter.) I doubt I will, but that's okay.

Q Mr. President, will you still be sending Treasury Secretary Mnuchin to the conference in Riyadh later this month?

THE PRESIDENT: What do you think about that?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I think we need to continue to evaluate the facts and we'll make that decision. As I talked with Secretary Mnuchin about it last night, we'll be taking a look at it through the rest of the week.

Q Mr. President, now that the Pastor has been released, what is the future for U.S. sanctions on Turkey?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we were very tough on Turkey, and we'll take a look. There was absolutely no deal made. Frankly, the only deal, if you can call it a deal, is a psychological one. We feel much different about Turkey today than we did yesterday. And I think we have a chance of really becoming much closer to Turkey, and maybe even having a very, very good relationship. We know the people. And as the Pastor said, these are incredible people. The people of Turkey are incredible people. And I think we have a chance now to really have a great relationship with Turkey. I hope that happens. Okay?

Thank you. Richard, do you have anything to say? I'd like to maybe -- you and Thom, you worked so hard. Richard Burr?

SENATOR BURR: Well, we welcome the Pastor back to North Carolina. He's been missed. But his work in Turkey, like everywhere else in the world, to spread the word of Jesus Christ is absolutely crucial and it's a foundational thing about this country, the United States. And I think that's why we love it so much. Welcome home.

PASTOR BRUNSON: Carolina Blue. (Laughter.)

SENATOR BURR: That's right.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. Thom?

SENATOR TILLIS: Pastor Brunson, you mentioned the State team. I just want to echo that the folks on the ground in Turkey, the two times that I was there, were amazing to work with. And they deserve a lot of credit. You know how many times they've met with you in the prison, and how much time they've spent with Norine. And we're very proud of them. They've done an extraordinary job. (Applause.)

PASTOR BRUNSON: Martin visited many times.

THE PRESIDENT: In fact, doesn't speak good English anymore. (Laughter.) He forgot English. You spent a lot of time over there. Fantastic.

MR. THOMEN: Thank you, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Great job. Patrick?

REPRESENTATIVE MCHENRY: What a special guy. What a special man of Christ. When he comes to the Oval Office and instead of saying "thank you" just for your prayers, he says, "Let me pray for you, Mr. President." What a special statement. And what a special statement about what you've done personally.

As a delegation in North Carolina, we've worked on this release for a very long time. But things changed when this administration came in. And the direct involvement of the Secretary of State, and the direct involvement of you, Mr. President, and the Vice President, has made all the difference. We're so grateful to see the happy family all back together once again.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Patrick. That's very nice. Mark?

REPRESENTATIVE MEADOWS: Yeah. Pastor, welcome home. But I think the other thing is, you had dozens and dozens of advocates. You had one champion in the President of the United States. But he was the answer to millions of prayers that went up on your behalf and the behalf of your family. So thank you for keeping the faith. Thank you for the entire team. And praise God for a wonderful celebration today. And thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mark, very much. Appreciate it.

James? Please. Oh, yes, go ahead.

MRS. BRUNSON: Just also thanks so much to the chargé. To both. There was a transition time, but both of them were just so wonderful. And we just want to acknowledge them publicly.

THE PRESIDENT: You know what? Before James goes -- and you know how James has fought for you -- I'd like you maybe to say something on behalf of your husband and how great he -- the bravery that he showed. Because you know exactly what was going on. You saw it better than anybody.

MRS. BRUNSON: It was hard for him. And really, the Lord pulled him through. Yeah. Yeah. I think it was a great testimony in Turkey. We would like people to know who we really are there. That we really are there to bless the country. That's our desire.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you for your bravery and everything else.

How about you?

MRS. FURNARI: I just want to say thank you for all of your involvement. I don't think that we'd be sitting here right now. I don't think that I'd be seeing my parents right now if it were not for your involvement and your strong stance. So thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I appreciate it. Thank you very much.

MRS. BRUNSON: She was the face of the family.

THE PRESIDENT: She was.

MRS. BRUNSON: She was.

THE PRESIDENT: She's become very famous. (Laughter.)

Go ahead.

MR. BRUNSON: I just wanted to say thank you for everything that you've done. I know you and the Vice President have worked really hard, and all of these people. And it was really hard, like, my dad being gone. So thank you for bringing him back. It was definitely amazing.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you've got great parents. And it's terrific. It's our honor.

And, James, maybe we'll close it out with you? I'll just say, on behalf of the Vice President, we are so happy, so thrilled. James Lankford, go ahead, please.

SENATOR LANKFORD: Thank you, Mr. President. You all have both faced incredible risks personally. Your tenacity to be able to stay there by his side throughout this, at great personal risk to yourself through this process, has been awe-inspiring for many of us to be able to watch as well.

We're incredibly grateful for you all to be able to be home. And we look forward to having a celebration like -- a day like this for other Americans from Turkey that need to come home as well, to be able to finish that out. And we look forward to getting all of those individuals resolved as well and back home.

But today, we're just incredibly grateful after two very long years, for you to be able to be home. And I look forward to hearing your stories about driving through drive-throughs and getting a hamburger -- (laughter) -- and about going to just hang out and going to your own church, and just being able to relax and to be able to be with family.

And we're all looking forward to those days of you all not having to be on the front page of a paper and just being back to being Americans again. And be able to do this. So, welcome home.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, James. Thank you.

END 3:06 P.M. EDT

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on behalf of White House Press Office
Sent: Saturday, October 13, 2018 8:47 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: Remarks by President Trump in Meeting with Pastor Andrew Brunson

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release October 12, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
IN MEETING WITH PASTOR ANDREW BRUNSON

Oval Office

2:41 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you very much, everybody. This has been a long journey. But for Andrew, it's been a very interesting day. Because as you probably heard, I said a little bit earlier, from a Turkish prison to the White House in 24 hours. That's not bad. (Applause.) Actually --

And I want to start by saying that Norine was unbelievable. She was calling and calling. She definitely loves you -- let me put it that way. (Laughter.) But she was calling and she wanted you out.

PASTOR BRUNSON: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: And she was not playing games. Right? And we're very proud of you, Norine. Thank you very much.

And you are very, very special to all of us. And, you know, we have some of our great leaders right here. You know James. You know Cindy. You know Richard. You know Thom. You know Patrick. You know Mark. And all of these people, and right back here. A whole group of people. They fought so hard for you. They wanted you out.

And again, we've been negotiating long and hard. We do not pay ransom in this country, at least any longer. We won't pay ransom. Otherwise you have big problems, and lots of things will happen. Lots of bad things will happen.

But I still -- I want to thank President Erdogan. We've been dealing. And we actually -- until this, we had a very good relationship. I was actually very surprised that we didn't work this out a couple of months ago. But it started in a different administration, and they were not going to work out anything. And we took it over, we inherited it. And we have, I think at this moment, gotten 19 different people out of various countries that were being held.

Chairman Kim was really great to us. I think that started the relationship that we have now in North Korea, with three hostages, as you know. Egypt -- we had Aya. Aya was, they said, a spy. She was sentenced to 25 years. They told President Obama, "We will not let her out under any circumstances." And they told me, "She'll be in the Oval Office in 24 hours." We all know that. You guys worked on that one too. And many others. Many others.

So I just want to congratulate you, because you have galvanized this country. I mean, you just take a look this -- there's so much interest. And it's your faith, it's your strength, what you've gone through. I know what you've gone through. And I also know that, a period of time ago, we were able to get you from prison to the house.

And again, I do have to say, it's not an easy situation for Turkey either. They had a lot of difficult situations going on, and I do want to thank President Erdogan for making this possible. You understand what I mean by that.

PASTOR BRUNSON: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: It wasn't easy. And wasn't easy for him.

Most importantly, I want to congratulate you and your family. I'd love to -- say a few words. You may want to thank all of these great leaders, because they were really calling me a lot. (Laughter.) They called me too much. I said, "Okay, I know, we're working on it." Right? But they are terrific fans of yours. And right now, the whole world is a fan of yours. The whole world is your fan and your family's fan.

So maybe you can say a few words. Introduce your family. And it's a great honor to have you back home.

PASTOR BRUNSON: Thank you, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

PASTOR BRUNSON: This is my daughter Jacqueline, my son Blaise. Jacqueline's husband, Kevin. And my oldest son, Jordan. And this is Neil, who's Norine's brother. Of course, Norine is my wife.

THE PRESIDENT: That's for sure. (Laughter.)

PASTOR BRUNSON: And we especially want to thank the administration. You really fought for us, unusually so. From the time you took office, I know that you've been engaged, and Secretary of State Pompeo also was very engaged and fought for us. And Vice President Pence, we're very grateful. Mr. Bolton.

There are a number of people in the Senate. And I can't mention everyone, but I know that Senator Tillis visited me in prison, and so did Senator Shaheen and Senator Graham. And Senator Lankford has been involved from the very beginning.

So, we're so grateful to so many people in the Congress who stood with us and who prayed for us, and who fought for us.

So we want to thank you all very much.

THE PRESIDENT: And I do have to say we did leave out many people in the Senate, many people in the House. You know that, Patrick. Many people have been left out. And we just can't go through all of the names, but it was everybody that wanted this to happen. It was really everybody. The complete Senate. I think we can probably say, Richard, this was bipartisan. Do you agree?

SENATOR BURR: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: This wasn't just Republican, right? But honestly, I think if there was ever a bipartisan event, this was it.

And I do have to thank Vice President Pence. He's doing a terrific job. He felt very, very strongly about this. And Secretary of State Pompeo, I would say we spoke about this at least once a day.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: We thought we had it done two months ago. Sometimes it doesn't always work out, but that's -- I can only tell you that's better than anybody else could have done. And we are so honored to have you.

And anything final you'd like to say? And then you're going to go and relax and go home, and celebrate, and have a great life, right? I won't ask you whether or not you're going back to Turkey. (Laughter.) I won't ask that question.

PASTOR BRUNSON: We do love Turkey. We were there for 25 years, and we love the Turkish people.

THE PRESIDENT: Great. That's very nice.

MRS. BRUNSON: We pray for their (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: That's very nice.

MRS. BRUNSON: That's sincere. It's very sincere.

THE PRESIDENT: That's very nice. And I know you do love the Turkish people. They're great people. I know that. They're great people.

PASTOR BRUNSON: We would like to pray for you. We pray for you often as a family. My wife and I pray for you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well, I need it probably more than anybody in this room. (Laughter.) So I would -- that would be very nice. Thank you.

PASTOR BRUNSON: Can we pray for you now?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Thank you very much.

(Pastor Brunson and Mrs. Brunson give a prayer.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Could I ask you one question? Who did you vote for? (Laughter.)

MRS. BRUNSON: You.

THE PRESIDENT: I knew the answer. I knew the answer.

PASTOR BRUNSON: I would like to say I sent in an absentee ballot from prison. (Laughter and applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: It's a little unfair. I knew the answer. I would never do that to myself. That could be too tough. Listen, congratulations.

MRS. BRUNSON: Thank you so much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Great parents. And fantastic children. They were so with you.

PASTOR BRUNSON: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: And it is an honor. Well done.

PASTOR BRUNSON: Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. We appreciate. Thank you.

And again, to President Erdogan, thank you very much. To the people of Turkey, thank you very much. I think this will be a big step in our relationship. We have had a very harsh relationship over the past number of months because of what was happening. And I'm not going to blame fault. I'm not going to say anything. I'm just saying this is a tremendous step toward having the kind of relationship with Turkey -- which can be a great relationship -- that I know we're going to have.

So thank you very much. And, President, thank you very much.

Does anybody have any questions? Would you like to have --

Q Pastor Brunson, can you tell us a little bit about what your next plans are? What do you plan on doing now that you're back safely?

PASTOR BRUNSON: We want to spend time with our children especially, and then take some time to pray and see what God wants for the next part of our lives.

Q Would you be willing to discuss what your treatment was like while you were over there? What was your experience in general while you were detained?

PASTOR BRUNSON: I think we'll do that in the future. We will probably be doing some interviews. Right now, we just want to especially -- this is a time to thank the administration and people in government who supported us. And that's especially what we want to emphasize, is our gratefulness, to say we love this country.

Last night, we arrived in Germany on a plane that President Trump sent to take us from Turkey. And the Ambassador to Germany met us there at 1:30 in the morning. I couldn't believe it. And he had an American flag to give us that had flown over there and was in Berlin. And I took it and I very naturally just -- I kissed it. I love this country, and we pray for this country.

Phil?

Q Mr. President, I have a question for you, sir. What do you owe the timing of Pastor Brunson's release? And do you think the disappearance and possible murder of Jamal Khashoggi has anything to do with the timing of this?

THE PRESIDENT: The timing is a strict coincidence; it really is. It's -- I've heard a couple of people say, wow, that's pretty tricky; could there be anything to it. No. Actually, Phil, no. It's a total coincidence. It's interesting. A lot of things happening in a certain part of the world. You know that. You know what else is going on. But there are probably things beyond that. But, no, it's a strict coincidence, Phil.

Q And I know we're here to celebrate Pastor Brunson. But if I could just follow up on something you said on "60 Minutes."

THE PRESIDENT: I have a feeling know what it's going to be.

Q Well, you suggested, sir, that there could be serious repercussions --

THE PRESIDENT: That's right.

Q -- for Saudi Arabia, if the U.S. determines that they killed Jamal Khashoggi. What do have in mind? What sort of -

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we'll be sitting together with all of the folks here, and a lot more. And we'll have to make a determination. I do think this: That I worked very hard to get the order for the military. It's \$110 billion. I believe it's the largest order ever made. It's 450,000 jobs. It's the best equipment in the world. But if they don't buy it from us, they're going to buy it from Russia or they're going to buy it from China, or they're going to buy it from other countries.

But Russia and China wanted it very badly. I got 100 percent -- almost 100 percent of their order. And I would -- from the standpoint of jobs, economic development, a lot of other reasons, I would like to do something where we could maybe look at other things -- I will tell the senators -- because that's a tremendous order for our companies. It's a tremendous order for -- really, from an economic development standpoint. You look at -- Texas has a big chunk of it. Almost all of our states are involved in that order.

So I actually think we'd be punishing ourselves if we did that. There are other things we can do that are very, very powerful, very strong. And we'll do that.

Now, as of this moment, nobody knows what happened. As of this moment. We're looking into it very seriously. Turkey is looking into it at a very high level -- at the highest level. And so is Saudi Arabia. I mean, they're going to get back, and they have been getting back. And I know Mike has been dealing with them. John has been dealing with them.

But in terms of the order of \$110 billion -- think of that -- \$110 billion -- all they're going to do is give it to other countries. And I think that would be very foolish for our country. But there are other things we can do that will be very severe.

Q What's an example of something you could do?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there are many things we can do. Would you like to speak up about that? James, do you have any suggestions? There are many, many things. I don't know if you want to -- you know, I don't want to put you on the spot, but if you guys would like to tell them some of the many things we can do. There's a big list.

SENATOR LANKFORD: Yeah, there's a big list. Obviously, we have a longstanding partnership with Saudi Arabia in a lot of areas. My first preference though is not talk about what we would do. Let's find out what did happen first.

THE PRESIDENT: That's a very good idea.

SENATOR LANKFORD: And I think the key thing is, he's still -- his fiancée is still waiting to be able to find out what happens. And there's a lot of speculation. But until we know, I hate to take the next step on it, and just to be able to see.

Q Mr. President, would you meet with the family in the Oval Office?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I would. In fact, we've invited his fiancée. We've invited her. So -- she actually wrote a letter to myself and the First Lady. And -- beautiful letter. And we have invited her, and I believe they're working it out, where she'll be coming. I mean, I'd love to have her. Great news, where it wouldn't even be necessary. But at this point, it's looking like -- it's looking like he perhaps won't be or isn't around. And that's very sad. I think we would have known by now. That was our first hope; our first hope was that he was not killed. But maybe that's not looking -- it's not looking too good, right? From what we're hearing.

SENATOR LANKFORD: A lot still to learn, I think, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: But there's a lot to learn. There really is. Okay?

Q Mr. President, what about the others imprisoned in Turkey? The other U.S. citizens -- three employees of U.S. consulates in Turkey. What efforts are being made to --

THE PRESIDENT: We're working -- as you speak, we are working on that. And, by the way, other people that are in prisons in other countries, other than Turkey -- we have other people that have been there for many years. We've done very well. We actually have at least 18. And the 18 were people that they said would never, ever be freed. And, by the way, Pastor Brunson was one of them. We were talking before. How many years was it? You can say the number you told me. It's a very scary number.

PASTOR BRUNSON: Well, they wanted 35 years.

THE PRESIDENT: They wanted him in jail for 35 years.

So, you know, we have many people throughout the world, in other countries, and we are working very hard. This group -- all of this group -- we're working very hard to take care of that situation.

Q Mr. President, is there a red line in terms of Saudi behavior that would cause you to reconsider that proposed arms sales?

THE PRESIDENT: We're going to just see what happened. We have to see what happened. As James said, it's really best to -- let's determine what happened first. There's plenty of things we can do that are very tough. Let's see what happened first.

Q Have you seen the video or audio recordings?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not. Have you seen the video?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Mr. President, I have not seen it.

THE PRESIDENT: I mean, I've heard -- we've all heard a lot about the audio. Nobody has seen it yet. So we do want to see it. I guess it's a combination of seeing it and hearing it. And maybe a lot can be --

Q And have you asked (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we're going to be seeing it very soon.

Q Have you spoken (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't. I haven't spoken.

Q Do you plan on it?

THE PRESIDENT: I mean, I've spoken to him many times about this, but I haven't called him yet. I will be. I will be. And I will be also calling King Salman of Saudi Arabia, because I think it's appropriate for me to ask him what is going on.

Q Do you have any idea when that call might take place, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Probably tonight or tomorrow.

Go ahead.

Q Pastor Brunson, do you plan to stay in the U.S. now?

PASTOR BRUNSON: For a time. We don't know what's ahead of us.

I would like to say something. Someone asked before about other American prisoners in Turkey. And I know that from dealing with the consulate there -- and they've been very involved with us, excellent consulate staff there; and Martin Thomen is here -- that they weren't only engaging for me; that they're engaging for everyone there.

So, as -- I know this just from talking with the consulate staff when they would come to visit me in prison that they were involved very much in advocating for the other prisoners there.

THE PRESIDENT: And I have to say, with respect to Turkey or Saudi Arabia, when you look at what's going on in Iran and other places, it's really bad. It is really bad. There are a lot of bad things going on in that part of the world. And frankly, in other parts of the world also.

Any other questions?

Q Mr. President, what did you do different than other administrations? You talked about the 19 people that you've seen -- Americans held abroad that you've seen released. What did you do differently than previous administrations?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, they're tending not to take them --

Q And you said you made no deals, so --

THE PRESIDENT: They are tending not to take them out of our administration. And that's good. I like that. And I think I could tell you why, but I won't.

But they tend not to take them out of our administration. And you know what? It's going to stay that way, okay?

Q Mr. President, did you (inaudible) last night?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Did you watch the interview with the First Lady on ABC last night?

THE PRESIDENT: I did.

Q What did you think?

THE PRESIDENT: I thought she was fantastic. I thought the First Lady was fantastic last night. I hope I do as well on "60 Minutes" tomorrow night. (Laughter.) I doubt I will, but that's okay.

Q Mr. President, will you still be sending Treasury Secretary Mnuchin to the conference in Riyadh later this month?

THE PRESIDENT: What do you think about that?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I think we need to continue to evaluate the facts and we'll make that decision. As I talked with Secretary Mnuchin about it last night, we'll be taking a look at it through the rest of the week.

Q Mr. President, now that the Pastor has been released, what is the future for U.S. sanctions on Turkey?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we were very tough on Turkey, and we'll take a look. There was absolutely no deal made. Frankly, the only deal, if you can call it a deal, is a psychological one. We feel much different about Turkey today than we did yesterday. And I think we have a chance of really becoming much closer to Turkey, and maybe even having a very, very good relationship. We know the people. And as the Pastor said, these are incredible people. The people of Turkey are incredible people. And I think we have a chance now to really have a great relationship with Turkey. I hope that happens. Okay?

Thank you. Richard, do you have anything to say? I'd like to maybe -- you and Thom, you worked so hard. Richard Burr?

SENATOR BURR: Well, we welcome the Pastor back to North Carolina. He's been missed. But his work in Turkey, like everywhere else in the world, to spread the word of Jesus Christ is absolutely crucial and it's a foundational thing about this country, the United States. And I think that's why we love it so much. Welcome home.

PASTOR BRUNSON: Carolina Blue. (Laughter.)

SENATOR BURR: That's right.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. Thom?

SENATOR TILLIS: Pastor Brunson, you mentioned the State team. I just want to echo that the folks on the ground in Turkey, the two times that I was there, were amazing to work with. And they deserve a lot of credit. You know how many times they've met with you in the prison, and how much time they've spent with Norine. And we're very proud of them. They've done an extraordinary job. (Applause.)

PASTOR BRUNSON: Martin visited many times.

THE PRESIDENT: In fact, doesn't speak good English anymore. (Laughter.) He forgot English. You spent a lot of time over there. Fantastic.

MR. THOMEN: Thank you, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Great job. Patrick?

REPRESENTATIVE MCHENRY: What a special guy. What a special man of Christ. When he comes to the Oval Office and instead of saying "thank you" just for your prayers, he says, "Let me pray for you, Mr. President." What a special statement. And what a special statement about what you've done personally.

As a delegation in North Carolina, we've worked on this release for a very long time. But things changed when this administration came in. And the direct involvement of the Secretary of State, and the direct involvement of you, Mr. President, and the Vice President, has made all the difference. We're so grateful to see the happy family all back together once again.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Patrick. That's very nice. Mark?

REPRESENTATIVE MEADOWS: Yeah. Pastor, welcome home. But I think the other thing is, you had dozens and dozens of advocates. You had one champion in the President of the United States. But he was the answer to millions of prayers that went up on your behalf and the behalf of your family. So thank you for keeping the faith. Thank you for the entire team. And praise God for a wonderful celebration today. And thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mark, very much. Appreciate it.

James? Please. Oh, yes, go ahead.

MRS. BRUNSON: Just also thanks so much to the chargé. To both. There was a transition time, but both of them were just so wonderful. And we just want to acknowledge them publicly.

THE PRESIDENT: You know what? Before James goes -- and you know how James has fought for you -- I'd like you maybe to say something on behalf of your husband and how great he -- the bravery that he showed. Because you know exactly what was going on. You saw it better than anybody.

MRS. BRUNSON: It was hard for him. And really, the Lord pulled him through. Yeah. Yeah. I think it was a great testimony in Turkey. We would like people to know who we really are there. That we really are there to bless the country. That's our desire.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you for your bravery and everything else.

How about you?

MRS. FURNARI: I just want to say thank you for all of your involvement. I don't think that we'd be sitting here right now. I don't think that I'd be seeing my parents right now if it were not for your involvement and your strong stance. So thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I appreciate it. Thank you very much.

MRS. BRUNSON: She was the face of the family.

THE PRESIDENT: She was.

MRS. BRUNSON: She was.

THE PRESIDENT: She's become very famous. (Laughter.)

Go ahead.

MR. BRUNSON: I just wanted to say thank you for everything that you've done. I know you and the Vice President have worked really hard, and all of these people. And it was really hard, like, my dad being gone. So thank you for bringing him back. It was definitely amazing.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you've got great parents. And it's terrific. It's our honor.

And, James, maybe we'll close it out with you? I'll just say, on behalf of the Vice President, we are so happy, so thrilled. James Lankford, go ahead, please.

SENATOR LANKFORD: Thank you, Mr. President. You all have both faced incredible risks personally. Your tenacity to be able to stay there by his side throughout this, at great personal risk to yourself through this process, has been awe-inspiring for many of us to be able to watch as well.

We're incredibly grateful for you all to be able to be home. And we look forward to having a celebration like -- a day like this for other Americans from Turkey that need to come home as well, to be able to finish that out. And we look forward to getting all of those individuals resolved as well and back home.

But today, we're just incredibly grateful after two very long years, for you to be able to be home. And I look forward to hearing your stories about driving through drive-throughs and getting a hamburger -- (laughter) -- and about going to just hang out and going to your own church, and just being able to relax and to be able to be with family.

And we're all looking forward to those days of you all not having to be on the front page of a paper and just being back to being Americans again. And be able to do this. So, welcome home.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, James. Thank you.

END 3:06 P.M. EDT

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[The White House]
Office of the Press Secretary
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 7, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
IN PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER MIDTERM ELECTIONS

East Room

11:57 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you very much. Please, thank you.

It was a big day yesterday. An incredible day. And last night, the Republican Party defied history to expand our Senate Majority while significantly beating expectations in the House for the midtown and midterm year. We did this in spite of a very dramatic fundraising disadvantage driven by Democrats' wealthy donors and special interests, and very hostile media coverage, to put it mildly. The media coverage set a new record and a new standard.

We also had a staggering number of House retirements. So it's a little tough. These are seats that could've been held pretty easily, and we had newcomers going in, and a lot of them worked very hard. But it's very difficult when you have that many retirements.

We held a large number of campaign rallies with large, large numbers of people going to every one -- and to the best of my knowledge, we didn't have a vacant or an empty seat; I'm sure you would have reported it if you spotted one -- including 30 rallies in the last 60 days. And we saw the candidates that I supported achieve great success last night.

As an example, of the 11 candidates we campaigned with during the last week, 9 won last night. This vigorous campaigning stopped the blue wave that they talked about. I don't know if there ever was such a thing, but could've been. If we didn't do the campaign, probably there could've been. And the history really will see what a good job we did in the final couple of weeks in terms of getting some tremendous people over the finish line. They really are tremendous people, but many of them were not known. But they will be known.

This election marks the largest Senate gains for a President's party in a first midterm election since at least President Kennedy's in 1962.

There have been only four midterm elections since 1934 in which a President's party has gained even a single Senate seat. As of now, we picked up, it looks like, three. Could be four. Perhaps it could be two. But we picked up a lot. And most likely, that number will be three. You people probably know that better than I do at this point, because you've looked at the more recent numbers.

Fifty-five is the largest number of Republican senators in the last 100 years. In the last 80 years, a sitting President's party has only gained a cumulative total of eight Senate seats, averaging one per decade. So, if we picked up two, three, or four, that's a big percentage of that number. So in the last 80 years -- you think of that -- only eight seats.

In President Obama's first midterm election, he lost six Senate seats, including in the deep-blue state of Massachusetts.

Republicans captured at least four Senate seats held by Democrat incumbents. And these are tremendously talented, hardworking people that did this -- Indiana, North Dakota, Florida, Missouri. We also won two open Senate seats in Tennessee -- I want to congratulate our great champion who did such a great job in Tennessee, Marsha -- and in Utah. And Arizona is looking very good. Really, very good. She's done a terrific job. That was a tough race, and she's done a fantastic job.

In each of these open seats, Democrats recruited very strong candidates with substantial fundraising and media support. We were getting bombarded with money on the other side.

In the House, Republicans dramatically outperformed historical precedents and overcame a historic number of retirements -- the most House Republican retirements in 88 years; 43 House Republicans retired.

Now, I will say this -- that, in many cases, they were chairman of committees, and they left because they weren't chairman, because the Republicans have a rule -- for six years. And what that does is wonderful in one way; it lets people come through the system and become chairman. And, in another way, it drives people out. Because when they're a chairman, they don't want to go and not be a chairman. You're the chairman of a committee, and you're a big deal, and then all of a sudden you're not doing that anymore. So they leave. We had a lot of them leave. I guess you can flip a coin as to which system is better. The Democrats do the other. Some of their folks have been in these committees for a long time as chairman.

In 2010, President Obama's first midterm, he lost 63 seats. By contrast, as of the most current count, it looks like around 27 House seats or something. And we'll figure that out pretty soon.

We also had a slew of historic wins in the governors' races -- the governors' races were incredible -- against very well-funded, talented, and skilled Democrat candidates and people that worked very, very hard, respectfully, for those candidates, like Oprah Winfrey, who I like. I don't know if she likes me anymore, but that's okay. She used to. But she worked very hard in Georgia. Very, very hard.

And if you look at them, we won four governors' races crucial to 2020 and the presidential race: Florida, Iowa, Ohio, and Georgia. The big ones: Florida, Iowa, Ohio, and Georgia. Can't get much more important than that. They were incredible. They were actually incredible campaigns, too. Incredible.

As of right now, Republicans will control the majority of governorships across the country, including three great women who worked very hard: the governors of Alabama, South Dakota, and Iowa. They worked very, very hard. They're very talented.

By expanding our Senate majority, the voters have also clearly rebuked the Senate Democrats for their handling of the Kavanaugh hearings. That was a factor. I think maybe a very big factor. The way that was handled, I think, was -- tremendous energy was given to the Republican Party by the way they treated then-Judge Kavanaugh, now Justice Kavanaugh. And expressed their support for confirming more great pro-Constitution judges.

Candidates who embraced our message of low taxes, low regulations, low crime, strong borders, and great judges excelled last night. They excelled. They really -- I mean, we have a list of people that were fantastic, and I'm just going to point them out: Mike Bost; Rodney Davis; Andy Barr was fantastic. I went to Kentucky -- for the most part, I didn't campaign for the House, but I did actually make a special trip for Andy Barr because he was in a very tough race in

Kentucky, and he won. That was a very tough race. The polls were all showing that he was down, and down substantially. And he won. And that one, I did do.

Pete Stauber, of Minnesota. Great guy. He's new and ran a fantastic race.

On the other hand, you had some that decided to "let's stay away." "Let's stay away." They did very poorly. I'm not sure that I should be happy or sad, but I feel just fine about it.

Carlos Curbelo; Mike Coffman -- too bad, Mike; Mia Love. I saw Mia Love. She'd call me all the time to help her with a hostage situation. Being held hostage in Venezuela. But Mia Love gave me no love, and she lost. Too bad. Sorry about that, Mia.

And Barbara Comstock was another one. I mean, I think she could have run that race, but she didn't want to have any embrace. For that, I don't blame her. But she -- she lost. Substantially lost.

Peter Roskam didn't want the embrace. Erik Paulsen didn't want the embrace. And in New Jersey, I think he could have done well, but didn't work out too good.

Bob Hugin, I feel badly because I think that's something that could have been won. That's a race that could have been won. That's a race that could have been won. John Faso.

Those are some of the people that, you know, decided for their own reason not to embrace, whether it's me or what we stand for. But what we stand for meant a lot to most people. And we've had tremendous support, and tremendous support in the Republican Party. Among the biggest support in the history of the party. I've actually heard, at 93 percent, it's a record. But I won't say that, because who knows. But we've had tremendous support.

America is booming like never before. Doing fantastic. We have Larry Kudlow here, and he said the numbers are as good as he's ever seen -- numbers -- at any time for our country. But he's a young man, so he hasn't seen that many numbers. (Laughter.) Where's Larry? You're a young man. Right, Larry? And you haven't been doing this too long, but they're as good as you've ever seen. And we may have -- if you have a question for Larry, we'll do that.

But I want to send my warmest appreciation in regards to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. We really worked very well together. We have been working very well together. We actually have a great relationship. People just don't understand that, which is fine.

And also to, perhaps -- it looks like, I would think -- Speaker Nancy Pelosi. And I give her a lot of credit. She works very hard, and she's worked long and hard. I give her a great deal of credit for what she's done and what she's accomplished.

Hopefully, we can all work together next year to continue delivering for the American people, including on economic growth, infrastructure, trade, lowering the cost of prescription drugs. These are some of things that the Democrats do want to work on, and I really believe we'll be able to do that. I think we're going to have a lot of reason to do it.

And I will say, just as a matter of business, I was with some very successful people last night. We were watching the returns. So if the Republicans won -- and let's say we held on by two, or one, or three -- it would've been very hard out of that many Republicans to ever even get support among Republicans, because there will always be one, or two, or three people that, for a good reason or for a bad reason, or for grandstanding -- we have that too; you've seen that. You've seen that. Plenty of grandstanding. But for certain reasons that many people -- you're always going to have a couple that won't do it. So that puts us in a very bad position.

In other words, had we kept it, and this is no -- I'm saying this for very basic reasons, common sense -- it puts us in a very tough position. We win by one, or two, or three, and you'll have one, or two, or three, or four or five even, come over and say, you know, "Look, we're not going to along with this. We want this, this, this..." And all of a sudden, we can't

even -- we wouldn't even be able to get, in many cases, out of the Republicans' hands before we sent it on to the Senate.

And now we have a much easier path, because the Democrats will come to us with a plan for infrastructure, a plan for healthcare, a plan for whatever they are looking at, and we'll negotiate. And as you know, it's been very hard in the Senate because we need, essentially, 10 votes from Democrats, and we don't get those votes. Because the Democrats do really stick together well. I don't agree with them on a lot of policy, but I agree with them on sticking together. They stick together great.

So now we go into the Senate. We don't have the 10 votes. And what happens? It doesn't get passed. Even if it gets out of the House, it doesn't get passed. So under the new concept of what we're doing, I say, "Come on. Let me see what you have." They want to do things. You know, I keep hearing about investigations fatigue. Like from the time -- almost from the time I announced I was going to run, they've been giving us this investigation fatigue. It's been a long time. They got nothing. Zero. You know why? Because there is nothing.

But they can play that game, but we can play it better. Because we have a thing called the United States Senate. And a lot of very questionable things were done between leaks of classified information, and many other elements that should not have taken place. And all you're going to do is end up in back and forth, and back and forth. And two years is going to go up, and we won't have done a thing.

I really think, and I really respected what Nancy said last night about bipartisanship and getting together and uniting. She used the word "uniting" and she used the word the bipartisanship statement, which is so important because that's what we should be doing. So we can look at us, they can look at us, and we can look at them, and it'll go back and forth. And it'll probably be very good for me politically. I could see it being extremely good politically, because I think I'm better at that game than they are, actually.

But we'll find out. I mean, you know, we'll find out. Or we can work together. You can't do them simultaneously, by the way. Just think if somebody said, "Oh, you can do them both." No, you can't. Because if they're doing that, we're not doing the other, just so you understand. So we won't be doing that.

But now what happens is we send it to the Senate, and we'll get 100 percent Democrat support, and we'll get some Republican support. And if it's good, I really believe we have Republicans that will help with the approval process -- and they will really help with the approval process.

So it really could be a beautiful bipartisan type of situation. If we won by one or two or three, or four or five, that wouldn't happen. And the closer it is, the worse it is. This way, they'll come to me, we'll negotiate. Maybe we'll make a deal, maybe we won't. That's possible. But we have a lot of things in common on infrastructure.

We want to do something on healthcare; they want to do something on healthcare. There are a lot of great things that we can do together. And now we'll send it up and we will really get -- we'll get the Democrats and we'll get the Republicans, or some of the Republicans. And I'll make sure that we send something up that the Republicans can support, and they're going to want to make sure they send something up that the Democrats can support.

So our great country is booming like never before, and we're thriving on every single level, both in terms of economic and military strength; in terms of development. In terms of GDP, we're doing unbelievably.

I will tell you, our trade deals are coming along fantastically. The USMCA and South Korea is finished. USMCA has gotten rave reviews. Not going to lose companies anymore to other countries. They're not going to do that because they have a tremendous economic incentive, meaning it's prohibitive for them to do that.

So it's not going to be like NAFTA, which is one of the worst deals I've ever seen -- although we've made some other pretty bad ones too.

Now is the time for members of both parties to join together, put partisanship aside, and keep the American economic miracle going strong. It is a miracle. We're doing so well. And I've said it at a lot of rallies. Some of you have probably heard it so much you don't want to hear it again. But when people come to my office -- presidents, prime ministers -- they all congratulate me, almost the first thing, on what we've done economically. Because it is really amazing.

And our steel industry is back. Our aluminum industry is starting to do really well. These are industries that were dead. Our miners are working again.

We must all work together to protect our military -- I have to do that -- to support out law enforcement, secure our borders, and advance really great policy, including environmental policy. We want crystal-clean water. We want beautiful, perfect air. Air and water, it has to be perfect.

At the same time, we don't want to put ourselves at a disadvantage to other countries who are very competitive with us and who don't abide by the rules at all. We don't want to hurt our jobs. We don't want to hurt our factories. We don't want companies leaving. We want to be totally competitive, and we are.

And right now we have just about the cleanest air, the cleanest water we've ever had, and it's always going to be that way. We insist on it. So environmental is very important to me.

And with that, I'll take a few questions if you'd like. Woah. (Laughter.) I didn't know what happened.

All right, go ahead, John.

That was a lot of hands shooting up so quickly.

Q There's a lot to talk about.

THE PRESIDENT: There's a lot to talk about.

Q Mr. President, you talked at length just now about bipartisanship. The presumed Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, talked about it last night. I'm sure that's encouraging for the American people. But do you really believe, given what the relationship has been like between this White House and the Democratic Party, that that will happen? Will --

THE PRESIDENT: I think there's a good chance, John. I think there's a very good chance that --

Q If I could just finish --

THE PRESIDENT: -- it will happen.

Q Wil you have to compromise on certain issues to the point where it could hurt you in 2020? And do you expect that when the Democrats take over the chairmanship of all these important committees, you're going to get hit with a blizzard of subpoenas on everything from the Russia investigation --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, then everything is going to come -- okay.

Q -- to your cellphone use, to your tax returns?

THE PRESIDENT: Ready? Then you're going to -- if that happens, then we're going to do the same thing and government comes to a halt. And I would blame them because they now are going to be coming up with policy. They're the majority in the House.

I expect that they will come up with some fantastic ideas that I can support on the environment, on so many different things, including prescription drug prices -- which we've made a big dent in already, including some of the things that we're working on for the vets. We've gotten choice approved. We've gotten a lot of things approved. But they have some other elements that we want.

There are many things we can get along on without a lot of trouble -- that we agree very much with them and they agree with us. I would like to see bipartisanship. I would like to see unity. And I think we have a very good chance of -- and maybe not on everything -- but I think we have a very good chance of seeing that.

Go ahead.

Q One question on the lame duck, sir, and one on your Cabinet. You toyed with the idea during the campaign of a shutdown before the midterms in order to secure border wall funding. Are you prepared to go on a shutdown strategy during a lame duck, since this might be your last, best chance --

THE PRESIDENT: Not necessarily my last chance.

Q -- to secure that?

THE PRESIDENT: Look, I speak to Democrats all the time. They agree that a wall is necessary. Wall is necessary. And as you know, we're building the wall. We've started. But we should build it at one time, not in chunks.

Q But you want much more money, and you want it much sooner.

THE PRESIDENT: No, we need the money to build the wall -- the whole wall -- not pieces of it all over. And we are doing it.

Now we have the military. Now we have other elements of wall that are pretty nasty, to be honest with you. But it's -- nevertheless, it's pretty hard to get through it.

But no, I'd like to see the wall. Many of the people that we'll be dealing with, you know, in 2006, they approved the wall, essentially. It was a very strong border fence, but it was the same thing. And they all approved it; they all agreed. I have statements from every one of them. We have them saying, "We need the wall." I mean, they sound like me.

But we do need it because we have people coming -- and I'm not just talking about the caravans. We have people coming through our border that you physically can't put that many people. It's a 2,000-mile stretch. You can't put that many people along that stretch to guard it. And even if you did, tremendous fighting would ensue.

So we need the wall. Many Democrats know we need the wall. And we're just going to have to see what happens. I mean, we'll be fighting for it. They have done everything in their power to make sure we're -- I got the military \$700 billion and \$716 billion. The wall is a tiny, tiny fraction of the cost of that. But their whole agenda has been to try not giving me anything for the wall.

I really believe, politically, they're hurting themselves. I actually think, politically, that's a good thing for me. But I want to get the wall up because we need it for security.

Q So no shutdown scenario for the mid -- for the lame duck?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I can't tell you that. No, I can't commit to that, but it's possible.

Q And can you give us clarity, sir, on your thinking currently now, after the midterms, about your Attorney General and your Deputy Attorney General? Do they have long-term job security?

THE PRESIDENT: I'd rather answer that at a little bit different time. We're looking at a lot of different things, including Cabinet. I'm very happy with most of my Cabinet. We're looking at different people for different positions. You know, it's very common after the midterms. I didn't want to do anything before the midterms.

But I will tell you that, for the most part, I'm extremely happy with my Cabinet. I think Mike Pompeo has fit in so beautifully. He's done an incredible job as --

Q How about your Interior Secretary?

THE PRESIDENT: We're looking at that, and I want -- I do want to study whatever is being said. I think he's doing --

Q Is he in jeopardy?

THE PRESIDENT: I think he's doing an excellent job, but we will take a look at that in a very strong -- and we'll probably have an idea about that in about a week.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay? Thank you.

Wow, this is --

Go ahead, Jon. He gave me a fair interview the other day, so I might as well ask him a question.

Q All right, thank you, Mr. President. And picking up there, you told me the other day that you are an "open book." So --

THE PRESIDENT: I think I am an open book.

Q So point blank, if Democrats go after your tax returns, will you try to block that or will you allow them to have it?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, look, as I have told you, they're under audit. They have been for a long time. They're extremely complex. People wouldn't understand them. They're done by among the biggest and best law firms in the country. Same thing with the accounting firms. The accountants are -- a very, very larger, powerful firm, from the standpoint of respect. Highly respected. Big firm. A great law firm. You know it very well. They do these things; they put them in. But people don't understand tax returns.

Now, I did do a filing of over 100 pages, I believe, which is in the offices. And when people went and saw that filing and they saw the magnitude of it, they were very disappointed. And they saw the -- you know, the detail. You'd get far more from that. And I guess we filed that now three times. But you get far more from that than you could ever get from a tax return.

But when you're under audit -- and I'm on under very continuous audit because there are so many companies, and it is a very big company -- far bigger than you would even understand. But it's a great company, but it's big and it's complex. And it's probably feet high. It's a very complex instrument.

And I think that people wouldn't understand it. But if I were finished with the audit, I would have an open mind to it. I would say that. But I don't want to do it during the audit. And, really, no lawyer -- even from the other side, they say often -- not always -- but when you're under audit, you don't have -- you don't subject it to that. You get it done, and then you release it.

So when that happens, if that happens, I would certainly have an open mind to it.

Q So that means that if the audit is still on, you will not turn over the tax returns, or you'll fight to block it?

THE PRESIDENT: When it's under audit -- no, nobody would. Nobody turns over a return when it's under audit, okay?

Yeah, go ahead. Please.

Q One, I was tempted to ask you why you like Oprah so much, but I think I'll go on to the question that --

THE PRESIDENT: Why do I like Oprah?

Q (Laughs.)

THE PRESIDENT: What kind of a question is that?

Q I'm just asking. Just curious. But the real question --

THE PRESIDENT: He's a comedian here.

Q The real question is --

THE PRESIDENT: I do like Oprah, by the way. I do. She was a person I knew well. Came to my place in Palm Beach often. And I have a lot of respect for her. Unfortunately, she didn't do the trick.

Q The real question is, you just said up here, and said from this podium, that it's -- are you offering a my-way-or-highway scenario to the Democrats? You're saying --

THE PRESIDENT: No. Negotiation. Not at all.

Q -- that if -- if they start investigating you, that you can play that game and investigate them.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yeah. Better than them.

Q Can you compartmentalize that --

THE PRESIDENT: And I think I know more -- and I think I know more than they know.

Q Can you compartmentalize that and still continue to work with them for the benefit of the rest of the country? Or are you --

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Are all bets off?

THE PRESIDENT: No. If they do that, then it's just -- all it is, is a warlike posture.

Yeah, go ahead.

Q And so then the -- wait a minute, then the follow-up then --

THE PRESIDENT: You heard my answer. Go ahead.

Q Well, since it's Jim, I'll let it go.

Q Okay. Thank you, Mr. President. I wanted to challenge you on one of the statements that you made in the tail end of the campaign in the midterms, that this --

THE PRESIDENT: Here we go.

Q Well, if you don't mind, Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: Let's go. Let's go. Come on.

Q That this caravan was an "invasion." As you know, Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: I consider it to be an invasion.

Q As you know, Mr. President, the caravan was not an invasion. It's a group of migrants moving up from Central America towards the border with the U.S.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you for telling me that. I appreciate it.

Q Why did you characterize it as such? And --

THE PRESIDENT: Because I consider it an invasion. You and I have a difference of opinion.

Q But do you think that you demonized immigrants in this election --

THE PRESIDENT: Not at all. No, not at all.

Q -- to try to keep --

THE PRESIDENT: I want them -- I want them to come into the country, but they have to come in legally. You know, they have to come in, Jim, through a process. I want it to be a process.

And I want people to come in. And we need the people.

Q Right. But your campaign had -- your campaign --

THE PRESIDENT: Wait. Wait. Wait. You know why we need the people, don't you? Because we have hundreds of companies moving in. We need the people.

Q Right. But your campaign had an ad showing migrants climbing over walls and so on.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that's true. They weren't actors. They weren't actors.

Q They're not going to be doing that.

THE PRESIDENT: They weren't actors. Well, no, it was true. Do you think they were actors? They weren't actors. They didn't come from Hollywood. These were -- these were people -- this was an actual -- you know, it happened a few days ago. And --

Q They're hundreds of miles of way though. They're hundreds and hundreds of miles away.

THE PRESIDENT: You know what?

Q That's not an invasion.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you should -- honestly, I think you should let me run the country, you run CNN --

Q All right.

THE PRESIDENT: -- and if you did it well, your ratings would be much better.

Q But let me ask, if I -- if I may ask one other question --

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, that's enough.

Q Mr. President, if I may -- if I may ask one other question.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, Peter, go ahead.

Q Are you worried --

THE PRESIDENT: That's enough. That's enough. That's enough.

Q Mr. President, I didn't -- well, I was going to ask one other. The other folks that had --

THE PRESIDENT: That's enough. That's enough.

Q Pardon me, ma'am, I'm -- Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me, that's enough.

Q Mr. President, I had one other question if --

THE PRESIDENT: Peter. Let's go.

Q -- I may ask on the Russia investigation. Are you concerned that you may have indictments --

THE PRESIDENT: I'm not concerned about anything with the Russia investigation because it's a hoax.

Q -- that you may indictments coming down? Are you --

THE PRESIDENT: That's enough. Put down the mic.

Q Mr. President, are you worried about indictments coming down in this investigation?

Q Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: I'll tell you what: CNN should be ashamed of itself having you working for them. You are a rude, terrible person. You shouldn't be working for CNN.

Go ahead.

Q I think that's unfair.

THE PRESIDENT: You're a very rude person. The way you treat Sarah Huckabee is horrible. And the way you treat other people are horrible. You shouldn't treat people that way.

Go ahead. Go ahead, Peter. Go ahead.

Q In Jim's defense, I've traveled with him and watched him. He's a diligent reporter who busts his butt like the rest of us.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'm not a big fan of yours either. So, you know.

(Laughter.)

Q I understand.

THE PRESIDENT: To be honest with you.

Q So let me -- so let me ask you a question if I can --

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: You aren't -- you aren't the best.

Q You repeatedly said -- Mr. President, you repeatedly -- over the course of the --

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible) called the enemy of the people --

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, just sit down, please.

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible) campaign (inaudible) and sent pipe bombs. That's just (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: Well, when you report fake news --

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: No. When you report fake news, which CNN does a lot, you are the enemy of the people.

Go ahead.

Q Mr. President, over the course -- over the course of the last several days of the campaign, sir -- sir, at the end of the campaign, you repeatedly said that Americans need to fear Democrats. You said Democrats would "unleash a wave of violent crime that endangers families everywhere." Why are you pitting Americans --

THE PRESIDENT: Because they're very weak on crime.

Q -- why are you pitting Americans against one another, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me. Peter. Peter, what are you -- trying to be him?

Q No, I'm just asking a question.

THE PRESIDENT: Peter, just let me just -- let me just tell you, very simple: Because they're very weak on crime. Because they have often suggested -- members and people within the Democrat Party, at a high level, have suggested getting rid of ICE, getting rid of law enforcement. That's not going to happen, okay?

We want to be strong on the borders. We want to be strong on law enforcement. And I want to -- I want to cherish ICE because ICE does a fantastic job. The -- what they do for us is so -- really, it's so unrecognized how good a job they do.

So we want to take care of them, and we want to hold them very close because they do a good job.

Q But the question, to be clear --

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, yeah, go ahead.

Q -- to be clear, though, the question, sir, is, why are you --

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Sit. Sit down, Peter.

Q -- but the question -- but you didn't answer my question. Just very simply, the question is, why are you pitting Americans against one another, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm not.

Q Is that how you view citizens of this country?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I'm not. Well, look, I'll tell you what -- we won a lot of elections last night. We did very well last night, and I think it's going to have --

Q But in many ways, it divided the country.

THE PRESIDENT: -- I think it's going to have a very positive impact. I watched NBC this morning; they didn't report it exactly correctly, but that's, you know, very, very -- that's the fact with NBC. Nothing I can do about that.

But I want this country to have protection. We want security in our country. I want security, Peter. I mean, you maybe don't think it's so important. And I think when you don't have it, you are indeed unleashing crime. I feel that.

Go ahead. Go ahead.

Q You said you would sign an executive order on birthright citizenship. Are you still going to sign the executive order on birthright citizenship?

THE PRESIDENT: You will answer -- you'll ask me that question a little bit later.

Go ahead.

Q Okay.

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead. Sure.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. The investigation by the Special Counsel, Robert Mueller, has been going on since last spring. It's been over --

THE PRESIDENT: It's been a long time.

Q Yeah, it's been over your head, over Republicans' head during the midterms as well. Is this an opportunity for you, Mr. President, to end that investigation? Would you consider removing Mr. Mueller from his position?

THE PRESIDENT: I could have ended it anytime I wanted. I didn't. And there was so collusion. There was no anything. I didn't.

They went after hackers in Moscow. I don't know about that. They went after people with tax problems, from years ago. They went after people with loans and other things. Had nothing to do with my campaign.

This is a investigation where many, many millions of dollars has been spent. And there's no collusion. It was supposed to be on collusion. There's no collusion. And I think it's -- I think it's very bad for our country, I will tell you. I think it's a shame.

And a poll came out today -- by the way, from NBC -- or least I saw it on NBC -- where a majority of the people do not agree with the Mueller investigation, or it wasn't approved. They have approval and disapproval, and it had a much higher disapproval.

It should end because it's very bad for our country. It's --

Q So if it's bad --

THE PRESIDENT: -- and I'm not just talking about the tremendous expense. And the other thing is, they should look at the other side also. They only look at one side. They're not looking at all of the things that came up during this investigation. They don't do that.

They should also get people that can be fair, not 13 or 14 or 17 -- I call them the "Angry Democrats." They are angry people. And it's a very unfair thing for this country. It's a very, very -- forget about unfair to me; it's very bad for our country.

Q So, Mr. President, if it's un --

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead. No, no, no. Please.

Q Mr. President, just to make the point -- if it's unfair to the country and it's costing millions of dollars, why don't you just end it?

THE PRESIDENT: Give him the mic, please. I've answered the question.

Q Okay.

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead, take the -- take the mic.

Q Voter suppression -- Mr. President, voter suppression.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'll give you voter -- I will give you voter suppression. You just have to -- sit down, please.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Sit down. I didn't call you. I didn't call you. I didn't call you.

I'll give you voter suppression: Take a look at the CNN polls, how inaccurate they were. That's called voter suppression.

Go ahead, please.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

Q In Georgia, sir? In Georgia?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm not -- I'm not responding. I'm responding to --

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me, I'm not responding to you. I'm talking to this gentleman. Will you please sit down?

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Would --

Q (Inaudible) but you said (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me. Excuse me. Would you please sit down?

Please, go ahead.

Q Thank you, Mr. President, now that the -- now that the House of Representatives has --

THE PRESIDENT: Very hostile -- such a hostile media. It's so sad. You ask me about --

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: No. You rudely interrupted him.

Q You responded (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: You rudely interrupted him.

Go ahead.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Do your demands remain the same to the United States Congress on immigration in exchange for a DACA fix? In exchange for an amnesty for 1.7 million, are you willing to change any of those demands that you gave to Congress earlier?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we could really do something having to do with DACA. And what really happened with DACA -- we could have done some pretty good work on DACA. But a judge ruled that DACA was okay. Had the judge not ruled that way, I think we would have made a deal. Once the judge ruled that way, the Democrats didn't want to talk anymore. So we'll see how it works out at the Supreme Court.

Go ahead.

Q Will you take questions from the international media --

THE PRESIDENT: From where?

Q From the international media.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, go ahead. Go ahead.

Q Afghanistan, Mr. President. Afghanistan --

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead. Which group? Where do you want me to take a question from? Go ahead, ma'am. Go ahead. Take the --

Either one. Either one.

Q Okay. (Laughs.)

THE PRESIDENT: Or both. Are you together? Go ahead.

Q We're not together. Mr. President, how do you respond to critics who say that your message on the campaign with minorities have been polarizing?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think it has been at all.

Q But is the election of two Muslim women -- one of them is veiled to the House, which is making history. Is this a rebuke of this message, do you think?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't understand what you're saying. What?

Q Is it a rebuke of this message? Do you think that this is more reflective of multiethnic and multicultural America?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that question -- I can only say this: If you look at the employment and unemployment numbers for African Americans, for Asian Americans, for Hispanic Americans, they're at a historic high. A poll came out recently where my numbers with Hispanics and with African Americans are the highest -- the best they've ever been. That had -- that took place two or three days ago, the poll.

I have the best numbers with African American and Hispanic American that I've ever had before. And you saw the same poll. So, I can't say that. I can say this: If you look at median income, you look at all of the employment and unemployment numbers, they're doing the best they've ever done. And it reflects -- it really is very reflective in the polls.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, go ahead.

Q Mr. President, I'm from Brooklyn, so you'll understand me.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. I understand you very well.

Q My question is on healthcare. How is it possible to keep premiums down and cover preexisting conditions without the individual mandate to fund it?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, what we're doing -- and we're -- if you look at the Department of Labor also -- Secretary separately -- Secretary Azar, what they've done. They've come up with some incredible healthcare plans, which is causing great competition and driving the prices right down.

But we are getting rid of the individual mandate because it was very unfair to a lot of people. But at the same time, we're covering the people that need it. But the individual mandate was a disaster because people that couldn't necessarily afford it were having to pay for the privilege of not having to pay for healthcare. And it was bad healthcare, at that.

So we are working many plans for healthcare. We're creating tremendous competition. We had Obamacare repealed and replaced. Unfortunately, one person changed his mind at the last moment. And we had no Democrat support. I have to say that. We didn't have one vote. We would have repealed it, replaced it. We would have had a large-scale, very good healthcare plan. Now we're doing it a different way. We're doing it a different way.

But getting rid of the individual mandate is a very, very popular thing and a very important thing. And people very much appreciate it.

Go ahead.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. That's enough.

Go ahead, please.

Q Thank you, sir. Two questions: One, I know you went through the results and you obviously studied them late last night. What lesson did you learn most from looking at those results? Was there one thing that, as you kind of reviewed them, that you'll change your strategy not just for Congress, but kind of going forward?

And then just a follow-up question.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think the results that I've learned, and maybe confirm, I think people like me. I think people like the job I'm doing, frankly. Because if you look at every place I went to do a rally, I couldn't do it with everybody. But -- and it was very hard to do it with people in Congress because there are just too many -- it will be too many stops.

But I did it with the Senate. I did it with Andy Barr, as you know. And -- and he won. He won a very tough race against McGrath.

It was a very, very tough race in Kentucky, and he was down quite a bit. And I went there, and we had a tremendous, very successful -- some of you were at that rally. And he won that race.

But I could only do that so much because there are just so many players involved. But I did focus on the Senate, and we had tremendous success with the Senate. Really tremendous success.

Q Can I ask you one more -- one more question, sir. Mr. President, one more question, if you don't mind. I'm so sorry, sir. It's a rare opportunity.

A lot of people are going to be rushing to Iowa, rushing to New Hampshire. You know that the Democrats are already looking ahead to 2020. Do you want to lock down your ticket right now, sir? Will the Vice President be your running mate in 2020?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I haven't asked him, but I hope so. Where are you? (Laughter.)

Mike, will you be my running mate? (Laughter.) Huh? Stand up, Mike, please. Raise your right hand. No, I'm only kidding. (Laughter.) Will you? Thank you, okay good. (Applause.) The answer is "yes." Okay?

Q Thank you, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: That was unexpected, but I feel very fine.

Yeah, please.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Going back to the Russia investigation and the potential investigations from the now-Democratic majority in Congress, some say that you could stop all this by declassifying --

THE PRESIDENT: I could. I could fire everybody right now. But I don't want to stop it, because politically, I don't like stopping it. It's a disgrace. It should have never been started because there was no crime. It is -- everybody has conflicts. They all have conflicts over there that are beyond anything that anybody has ever seen in terms of conflicts -- from the fact that people ask for jobs; from the fact that they have very good friends on the other side, like really good friends, like Comey -- who, by the way, lied and leaked, and also leaked classified information. Nothing happened there. It might, perhaps. Maybe something is happening that I don't know about.

I stay away from it. But do you know what I do? I let it just go on. They're wasting a lot of money, but I let it go on because I don't want to do that. But you're right -- I could end it right now. I could say that investigation is over.

But it's -- it's really -- it's a disgrace, frankly. And it's an embarrassment to our country. It's an embarrassment to the people of our country. And it's too bad.

Go ahead.

Q What about the declassification of the documents? Some say that that would clear it all up.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're looking at that.

Q Are you still considering it?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. We're looking at that very seriously. Declassification? We're looking at that very seriously.

Q Okay. Can I ask one more question?

THE PRESIDENT: It's amazing how people on the other side just don't want those documents declassified. But, no, we're looking at that very carefully. I certainly wanted to wait until after the midterms.

Q Can I ask you one more question, Mr. President? Okay, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. You have campaigned as a pro-life President. You have defended the rights of unborn children. You now have a divided Congress. It's unlikely to pass --

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. Tough.

Q -- to pass any pro-life bills.

THE PRESIDENT: Very tough issue.

Q How are you going to push forward your pro-life agenda?

THE PRESIDENT: Just going to push. I've been pushing. I've done a very good job, too. Very happy with me. But it's a tough issue for the two sides. There's no question about it.

Q But what are you going to do to --

THE PRESIDENT: There is great division -- what am I going to do? I won't be able to explain that to you, because it is an issue that is a very divisive, polarizing issue. But there is a solution. I think I have that solution, and nobody else does.

We're going to be -- we're going to be working on that.

Yes, go ahead, please. She took your place, but that's okay.

Q Mr. President, just a quick question on rural America. In states like Indiana and North Dakota, folks turned out for Republican candidates. Could you talk a little bit about what this means for your agenda in terms of trade and the farm bill?

THE PRESIDENT: The farm bill is working really well. I mean, we could have had it approved any time. But we're looking to get work rules approved. The farmers want it. I'd like it. The problem is, the Democrats are not giving us the 10 votes that we need.

We are -- everybody wants it. The farmers want it. But the Democrats are not approving the farm bill with work rules. We could have it very fast without the work rules, but we want the work rules in, and the Democrats just don't want to vote for that. So, at some point, they'll have to pay maybe a price.

Jeff, go ahead.

Q Thank you very much, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

Q Have you seen any evidence that Russia or China intervened in yesterday's election?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we've going -- we're going to make a full report. And unlike the previous administration, we've done a lot of work on that issue. And if you look -- speak with the FBI, speak with the Department of Justice, speak to Homeland Security, we've spent a lot of time. It gets very little coverage in the papers. I mean, you cover the nonsense part, but you don't cover the important. This is very important.

And we have been working very hard on China and Russia, and everybody else, looking into our elections or meddling with our elections. But people tend not to write about it. But we have worked very hard, as you probably heard.

Q What do you -- what do you intend to say, sir, to President Xi and to President Putin when you meet with them later this month?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I have a good relationship with both. I know President Xi better. But I think I have a very good relationship with both. I actually had a very good meeting in Russia that you people didn't agree with, but that's okay. It doesn't much matter, obviously. Because here I am.

Q You mean Helsinki?

THE PRESIDENT: But the fact is that I had a very, very good meeting -- a very, very good meeting with President Putin, and a lot was discussed about security, about Syria, about Ukraine, about the fact that President Obama allowed a very

large part of Ukraine to be taken. Right now, you have submarines off that particular parcel that we're talking about. You know what I'm talking about.

Q That was President Putin who annexed Crimea, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: That was President Obama's regime. That was during President Obama. Right? That was not during me. No, that was President Obama --

Q But it was President Putin who did the annexation.

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. It was President Obama that allowed it to happen. It had nothing to do with me.

Yeah. Go ahead. Go ahead. Go ahead.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Cordelia Lynch, Sky News. You're a man who likes to win, but last night was not an absolute victory for you.

THE PRESIDENT: I'll be honest: I thought it was a -- I thought it was a very close to complete victory. When you look at it from the standpoint of negotiation, when you look at it from the standpoint of deal making -- because it's all about deal making -- again, if we had the majority, and we had one or two or three votes to play with, we would never -- we would have been at a standstill.

I really believe that we have a chance to get along very well with the Democrats. And if that's the case, we can do a tremendous amount of legislation and get it approved by both parties.

So I consider it to be -- hey, look, I won Georgia. President Obama campaigned very hard in Georgia. Oprah Winfrey campaigned very, very hard. All over the television. I said this is going to be tough. I only had me. I didn't have anybody else. And I went to Georgia, and we had one of the largest crowds that anybody here has seen, ever, at a political rally. And you know what? He won. And he won actually by, you know, pretty good margin. He won.

And then we went to Florida, and they had celebrities all over the place. And a man, who happens to be very smart person, was running -- Ron DeSantis. And people didn't give him a chance. And I went and we had -- we did some great work. And they're going to have a great governor of the state of Florida.

And then we talked about the Senate, and a lot of money was pouring in for the Democrat. This is a man who's been in office for like 44 years or something. This is man who was like a professional at getting elected and being in office. So he's not -- Bill Nelson -- not easy to beat. Okay? And -- but they had a lot of celebrities coming out for Nelson. They had everybody coming out for Nelson. And Rick Scott won. And I helped him.

And I think we've done an amazing job. And you could look at many other places -- if you just take a look at some of the other places. And we just got the word that, in Iowa, you have a governor who just got extended, who's -- Kim just got extended. And numerous other places.

I think it was a great victory. I'll be honest: I think it was a great victory. And actually, some of the news this morning was that it was, in fact, a great victory.

But if you look at it from the standpoint of gridlock, I really believe there's going to be much less gridlock because of the way this is going, than any other way.

Q Mr. President, a quick follow-up on that.

THE PRESIDENT: Sit down, please.

Go ahead.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Let me ask you about one of the campaign promises you made down the stretch, which was a 10 percent tax cut for the middle class. You just talked about gridlock. Democrats, they now run the House Ways and Means Committee. If it means a tax cut of some kind for the middle class, but that means raising rates elsewhere -- corporations, on the wealthiest -- is that a trade-off that you would be willing to make, and able to enact a middle-class tax cut?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it could be. You know that this will have to be now proposed. Because if we did it now, we don't have the votes in the Senate. You don't have -- we need -- we would need 10 Democrat vote; we probably couldn't get them. If we could, we could pass it very easily in the House. But there's no reason to waste time because you don't have the votes in the Senate.

But if the -- as an example, if the Democrats come up with an idea for tax cuts, which I'm a big believer in tax cuts, I would absolutely pursue something even if it means some adjustment.

Q Some adjustment on which side? The corporate? The individual?

THE PRESIDENT: Some adjustment. Yeah, to make it possible. But I would love to see a tax cut for the middle class. Now, that's going to be their decision. They're going to have to make that decision.

As you know, if we bring it up to the Senate, we'd need Democrat votes -- 10 -- and we don't have those 10 votes.

Q And just because the markets would -- and just because the markets would want to know, sir -- some adjustment, would that be one, two, three percent on either side?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I'm not telling you that. I'm just saying, I would be certainly willing to do a little bit of an adjustment.

Go ahead. Behind me. Go ahead, please.

Q Mr. President, thank you very much. Two questions. One is, you had talked about leaders who had called to congratulate you. Did President Putin call to congratulate you? And will you, in fact, meet with him at lunch this coming weekend?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, as I understand it, we're having -- and I guess a lot of you are going over. We're having a lunch for numerous countries. I'll be there. I believe President Putin is going to be there. We don't have anything scheduled. I don't think we have anything scheduled in Paris. And I'm coming back very quickly.

We're going over -- there's a great event. This is an important -- really, it's going to be very important and, I think, a very beautiful ceremony. I'm looking forward to going. And we're representing the incredible heroes of the world, but the heroes of our country from World War I. And so I'll be going there, and I am very proud to go there.

Q And did he call you?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think we have time set aside for that meeting.

Now, with that being said, we're very shortly meeting again at the G20, where he'll be there and I'll be there. And that's where we're actually looking forward to meeting.

We will be having -- we will be having a lunch, but I think there are many people there.

Q And did he call you to congratulate you? And if I could also just invite you, since this is quite a gathering we've got here, to go ahead and talk about the staff changes that you expect in the White House, while we're here. We're eager to hear about them. Is General Kelly going to stay on?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think what I'll do is -- as we make changes, we'll sit down and talk to you about it. I mean, there's no great secret. A lot of administrations make changes after midterms. I will say that, for the most part, I'm very, very happy with this Cabinet. We're doing a great job.

Q But what about in the White House? What about in the White House, sir? You've got a lot White House staff. Some have been talking about leaving. General Kelly has been rumored to be leaving. Is he?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that's okay. No, people leave. People leave.

Q And is that going to happen, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: People leave. I haven't heard about John Kelly. But, no, people -- people leave. They come in, they're here. It's a very exhausting job. Although, I love doing it, I must tell you. But it's exhausting for a lot of people. I'm surprised at a lot of people. They start off, they're young people, they're there for two years, and they're old by the time they leave. (Laughter.) It's quite exhausting. But I love doing it.

And I'll tell you, there will be changes. Nothing monumental from that standpoint. I don't think very much different than most administrations. But -- and we have -- I mean, we have many people lined up for every single position. Any position. Everybody wants to work in this White House. We are a hot country. This is a hot White House. We are a White House that people want to work with.

Okay. No, no. Please. Behind you. Behind you. Go ahead.

Q Mr. President, this has been a very challenging campaign. It is -- this has been a very challenging campaign.

THE PRESIDENT: It's been a very challenging campaign. That's true.

Q It has involved quite of a lot of abuse and a lot of violence. People have died during the course of this campaign.

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

Q Is there any way in which you think the temperature could be lowered? Perhaps peace could break out with the media? Perhaps you bipartisan relationships across the House and the Senate may now produce some change. Or are we going to have more of the same?

THE PRESIDENT: It's a very fair question. Look, I would love to see unity and peace and love, and any other word you want to use. And obviously, I think we had to, especially at this particular juncture, we had to wait until after the midterms were over. Now they're over.

If they would cover me fairly -- which they don't. Which they don't. I'm not saying that in a hostile way. I get extremely inaccurate coverage. I can do something that's fantastic, and they'll make it look like not good. And I don't mind being - having bad stories. If I make a mistake, cover it. I would like you to cover it fairly, but cover it.

But when you do something terrific -- look how little the economy is talked about. A poll came out this morning talking about how little the three networks -- I don't think they included CNN -- but how little the three networks talk about how good the economy is. How little. Almost not at all.

If President Obama had this economy -- and, by the way, if that administration, through somebody else, kept going, you would have had negative 4.2 instead of positive 4.2 percent growth. You would have had negative. It was heading down.

But here -- the point is this --

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me. I would love to see unity, including with the media. Because I think the media -- I'll be honest: I think it's a very divisive thing for our country. And you would be amazed at how smart people are that are reading your stories and seeing your stories and watching. You would be amazed how perceptive and how smart they are. They get it. And it really does bring disunity.

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me. You are not -- you are not called on.

Q Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead. Go ahead. Go ahead, please.

Q Thank you, President Trump. Shortly after your victory speech on the historic night of -- back in November 2016, I asked you to what single factor you most attributed this victory to.

THE PRESIDENT: Say it? You have to speak up.

Q Sure. On the night of your victory, I asked you, right after your speech, to what you would attribute your victory. You pointed up to the ceiling, and you said that it was God. Based off of that, how would you say, over the last two years, God plays -- what kind of a factor He plays in the day-to-day execution of the Office of the Presidency?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, God plays a big factor in my life, and God plays a factor in the lives of many people that I know very well in this room, like your Vice President. God plays a very big role in my life.

Q And one more -- one more back to -- a quick one. Quick follow-up. Which loss last night surprised you the most? And which of these unsuccessful candidates are you most likely to consider for a future administration?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing surprises me in politics.

Q Would you consider any --

THE PRESIDENT: But there were some losses last night. And there were some victories last night that have been incredible. I mean, there were victories last night that nobody would believe, especially based on the suppression polls. They had a lot of suppression polls.

Q Would you consider any --

THE PRESIDENT: And there were some victories last night that were very surprising, but I'm not going to pick out special -- you know, special people.

Q Would you consider any for a post?

THE PRESIDENT: It's tough enough for those people to have a loss.

Q Would you consider any for an administration post, moving forward? As one of the very few of the 3.7 percent unemployed --

THE PRESIDENT: Would I what? What?

Q Would you consider any of the people who lost last night for a post in the administration in the near future?

THE PRESIDENT: I know a couple of very good ones. Yeah, I would, actually.

Go ahead, please.

Q Mr. President -- Mr. President, I asked you on Monday if there was anything that you regret in your first two years. And you said that, at times, you could have and should have used a, quote, "softer tone." Your critics, as you can imagine -- your skeptics -- they say they're not holding their breath on that happening. Will you indeed have to change your tone if you're to get things passed through Congress after losing the House?

And you also said you might extend an olive branch. What would that look like?

THE PRESIDENT: I would love to have -- I would love to have -- I'd be very good at a low tone. But when things are done not correctly about you -- written about you, said about you on television, on wherever it is -- you have to defend yourself.

I would love to do a very -- a very even tone. It's much easier than what I have to do. I have to go around. And going around is much easier than facing somebody and being treated fairly. But when you're not treated fairly, you really have no choice.

I would love to have a very even, modest, boring tone. I would be very honored by that. But you know what? When you have to fight -- all the time fight -- because you're being misrepresented by the media, you really can't do that.

Q But not about the media, sir. But, sir, real quickly -- not about the media, but what about with Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, please. Go ahead.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us how you focus on the economic --

THE PRESIDENT: Where are you from, please?

Q Japan. Prime Minister Abe.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Say hello. Say hello to Shinzo.

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: I'm sure he's happy about tariffs on his cars. Go ahead.

Q That's my question, actually. So how you focus on the trade and economic issues with Japan? Will you ask Japan to do more? Will you change your tone?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't -- I really don't understand you.

Q How would you focus on trade and economic --

THE PRESIDENT: Trade with Japan?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're dealing with Japan right now on trade. Japan has -- it's a great country. You have a great Prime Minister who just had a very successful election. He's a very good friend of mine. He's one of the people I'm closest with.

And -- but I tell him all the time that Japan does not treat the United States fairly on trade. They send in millions of cars at a very low tax. They don't take our cars. And if they do, they have a massive tax on their cars.

Japan -- and I'm not blaming Japan; I'm blaming the people that were in charge of the United States for allowing that to happen.

But as you know, we have close to \$100 billion trade deficit with Japan. And Japan has treated us very unfairly. But don't feel lonely because you weren't the only one.

Q How about North Korea? How about North Korea?

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Two international questions. The first one: Secretary Pompeo's talks with North Korea have been postponed. What is happening there?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, nothing --

Q And will your meeting still happen with --

THE PRESIDENT: No, we're going to change it because of trips that are being made. We're going to make it at another date. But we're very happy how it's going with North Korea. We think it's going fine. We're in no rush. We're in no hurry. The sanctions are on.

Q You still expect to meet Kim Jong Un?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. Listen. Excuse me. Wait.

Q Sorry, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: The sanctions are on. The missiles have stopped. The rockets have stopped. The hostages are home. The great heroes have been coming home.

Mike Pence was in Hawaii, where the -- one of the most beautiful ceremonies that anyone has ever seen for the fallen. These are great heroes. Very important. When I was running, a lot of people -- as many years ago as it was -- in many cases, grandchildren -- but they were asking about that. They're coming home and they're being provided to us as we speak.

But I'm in no rush. I'm in no rush. The sanctions are on. I read a couple of times, and I've seen a few times where they said, "He's done so much." What have I done? I met.

Now, I'd love to take the sanctions off. But they have to be responsive, too. It's a two-way street.

But we're not in any rush at all. There's no rush whatsoever. You know, before I got here, they were dealing with this for over 70 years. And I guess, on a nuclear front, for 25 years. That's a long time.

I've been there; I probably left Singapore four or five months ago. And we made more progress in that four or five months than they've made in 70 years. And nobody else could have done what I've done.

But I'll say this -- I'll say this very simply: We're in no rush. The sanctions are on. And whenever it is -- but that meeting is going to be rescheduled.

Q That meeting -- but about your meeting with Kim Jong Un, sir, will it happen in the next months?

THE PRESIDENT: Sometime next year, I would say.

Q Sometime next year?

THE PRESIDENT: Sometime -- sometime early next year. Yeah.

Q And a quick question on the USMCA. Now that it's been concluded, have you repaired your relationship with Prime Minister Trudeau?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I have. We have a very good relationship.

Q Thank you very much, Mr. President. We've been talking a lot about division and the division that exists in this country right now.

THE PRESIDENT: True. That's true.

Q And some of the statistics are disturbing, I think, to just about everyone. Anti-Semitic incidents have increased by 57 percent since 2016. Hate crimes are on the rise. Why do you think that is? And what will you do about it as President?

THE PRESIDENT: It's very sad to see it. I hate to see it. And, as you know, I've done more -- in fact, if you were with us the last time we met, Prime Minister Netanyahu said that, "This President has done more for Israel than any other President." Those words. Those exact words.

Jerusalem, protection, working together -- so many different things. But the big thing is Jerusalem. You know, many, many President have said they are going to build the embassy in Jerusalem. Never happened. Making it the capital of Israel -- never happened. Never happened. But it happened with me, and quickly.

And not only did it happen, we built the embassy. That would have taken another 15 or 20 years and cost probably billions of dollars, and we did it for a tiny amount of money. It's already done. It's open.

Nobody has done more for Israel than Donald Trump. And the nice part is that's not me saying it; that's Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Q But what about the -- Mr. President, what about the divides in this country? Mr. President, what about healing the divides in this country -- addressing those issues, specifically?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we want to see -- we want to see it healed. And one of the things I think that can help heal is the success of our country. We are really successful now. We've gone up \$11.7 trillion in -- in worth.

If you know, China has come down tremendously. Tremendously. China would have superseded us in two years as an economic power; now, they're not even close.

China got rid of their "China '25" because I found it very insulting. I said that to them. I said, "China '25" is very insulting, because "China '25" means, in 2025, they're going to take over, economically, the world. I said, "That's not happening."

And we've gone way up. They've gone down. And I don't want them to go down. We'll have a good meeting and we're going to see what we can do.

But I have to say this: Billions of dollars will soon be pouring into our Treasury from taxes that China is paying for us. And if you speak to Mr. Pillsbury, who probably is the leading authority on China -- he was on the other day saying he has never seen anything like it. And you know who else hasn't? China hasn't.

Q And Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: But we're going to try and make a deal with China because I want to have great relationships with President Xi, as I do, and also with China.

Q -- you're talking about the economic --

THE PRESIDENT: Okay.

Q How do you see your role --

THE PRESIDENT: All right.

Q -- as a moral leader?

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead, please.

Q Mr. President, just how do you see --

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead, please. Please, please.

Q -- your role as a moral leader?

THE PRESIDENT: Please, please. Go ahead. There's so many people, I'm sorry. Go ahead.

Q As a moral leader, though?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I am a great moral leader, and I love our country.

Go ahead, please.

Q Thank you, sir. You said earlier in this press conference that Democrats had a choice; that you would not work with them on legislation if they were investigating you. Do you not have a choice in the matter as well? Don't you have a responsibility --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think it's inappropriate -- no, no. I think it's very inappropriate.

We should get along and get deals done. Now, we can investigate. They look at us. We look at them. It goes on for two years. Then, at the end of two years, nothing is done.

Now, what's bad for them is, being in the majority, I'm just going to blame them. You understand. I'm going to blame them. They're the majority.

Honestly, it makes it much simpler for me. I -- they will be blamed. But I think Nancy Pelosi -- and, you know, I put that statement out on social media today about Nancy Pelosi that, if she's short of votes -- because frankly, I think she deserves -- and a lot of people thought I was being sarcastic or I was kidding. I wasn't.

I think she deserves it. She's been fighting long for it. She's been fighting -- I really mean this. This was -- there was nothing sarcastic about it or -- it was really meant in -- with very good intentions. I think she deserves it. She's fought long and hard. She's a very capable person. And, you know, you have other people shooting at her, trying to take over the Speakership.

And I said, if -- if it's appropriate -- I said, if we can and if we will, if she has a problem, I think I would be able to very easily supply her the necessary votes.

That's not said in any way other than I really believe she deserves that position. I also believe that Nancy Pelosi and I can work together and get a lot of things done, along with Mitch and everybody else that we have to work with. I think we'll get a lot done.

Q Mr. President, why can't you --

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, go ahead.

Q Mr. President, why can't you --

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead.

Q Mr. President, why can't you do that while subpoenas are coming through?

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me?

Q Why can't you work together while there are subpoenas or while there are investigations in process?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we will. Look, now that the election is over -- the election is over. Now everybody is in love. But then I see the hostility of questions in the room. I come in here as a nice person wanting to answer questions and I have people jumping out of their -- their seats, screaming questions at me.

No, the election is over. And I'm, you know, very -- I am extraordinarily happy. I really am. And, by the way, I'd tell you if I wasn't.

Look at what happened in Florida. Look at what happened in Georgia. Look at what happened in so many locations with governorships. Nobody talks about the governorships. Look at the amount of work that was given to these other candidates against my candidate.

And, I mean, I'm extraordinarily happy. And if I wasn't, I'd let you know. There's nothing wrong. I mean, look, you look at midterms and you look at elections -- elections generally, you see it's very rare that a party who has the presidency does well. We did unbelievably well. To win Florida, both the Senate and the governorship against two very talented people.

I'll tell you what: We did incredibly. To win Georgia, where you had some of the biggest stars campaigning endlessly, including President Obama. You know, I'll tell you what: This was a great victory for us. And again, from a dealmaking

standpoint, we are all much better off the way it turned out. Because I really believe, if the Democrats want to, we can do a tremendous amount of great legislation.

Yes, please. Go ahead.

Should we keep this going for a little while?

Q Yes!

Q Yes, I think you should keep this going.

THE PRESIDENT: When you get bored, would you please tell me? Seriously, tell me. I don't want to --

Q We're never bored.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, no. Hopefully not. I don't want to overstay. But, yes, please. Go ahead.

Q Hi, Mr. President. Yamiche Alcindor with PBS NewsHour. On the campaign trail, you called yourself a nationalist. Some people saw that as emboldening white nationalists. Now people are also saying --

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know why you'd say that. That's such a racist question.

Q There are some people that say that now the Republican Party is seen as supporting white nationalists because of your rhetoric. What do you make of that?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I don't believe that. I don't believe that.

I don't believe -- well, I don't know. Why do I have my highest poll numbers ever with African Americans? Why do I have among the highest poll numbers with African Americans? I mean, why do I have my highest poll numbers? That's such a racist question.

Honestly, I mean, I know you have it written down, and you're going to tell me. Let me tell you: It's a racist question.

Q And Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: I love -- and you know what the word is? I love our country. I do. You call -- you have nationalists. You have globalists. I also love the world and I don't mind helping the world, but we have to straighten out our country first. We have a lot of problems.

Q And --

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me. But to say that -- what you said is so insulting to me. It's a very terrible thing that you said.

Q And Mr. President -- Mr. President, people have --

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Please, go ahead. Go ahead.

Q You've talked about --

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me.

Q You talked about middle-class tax cuts on the campaign trail. How will you get Democrats to support that policy?

THE PRESIDENT: You have to ask them.

Q Well, what's your plan for working with Democrats --

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me.

Q -- on the middle-class tax plan?

THE PRESIDENT: You know what my plan is? You know what my plan is? I'll ask them. And if they say yes, I'm all for it. And if they say no, there's nothing you can do because you need their votes.

Go ahead.

Q Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. Francesca Chambers, DailyMail.com. You said many times on the campaign trail that you didn't want Nancy Pelosi to be Speaker. At least you suggested that. You spent a lot of time talking about her and Chuck Schumer.

THE PRESIDENT: It's not a question of want. I would've -- so, let me answer it a little -- would I have preferred winning by two or three or four? I would almost have to think about that. But certainly, I like to win. And if I win, she's not going to be Speaker.

Q What did she say to you though, yesterday, that made you give her your support?

THE PRESIDENT: Honestly, we had a very warm conversation. You know, she loves this country. And she's a very smart woman. She's done a very good job. She was really -- I mean, she's had a very -- she's had a very --

Q Did she promise that they wouldn't seek to impeach you?

THE PRESIDENT: She's had a very, very -- we didn't talk about impeaching. We didn't talk about -- what do you do? Do you impeach somebody because he created the greatest economic success in the history of our country? "Let's impeach him because the country is so successful. Let's impeach him." "Has he done anything wrong?" They asked somebody, "Has he done anything wrong?" "No, but let's impeach him anyway."

And they also said, "Let's impeach Justice Kavanaugh. Let's impeach him." And now they have the second woman coming out that -- the first or second. And I hate to say this, but it was public.

"And, after him, we're going to impeach the Vice President. We're going to impeach Mike Pence." Mike Pence doesn't get impeached for anything. "So let's impeach the President, and then we'll impeach the Vice President."

These people are sick. And you know what? They have to get their bearing. Really, they have to get their bearing. And when you ask about division, they're the ones that caused the division. They caused tremendous division.

Q Okay. Regarding all the retirements in the House -- regarding all the retirements in the House, Mr. President -- really quickly -- you suggested that --

THE PRESIDENT: Who is retiring?

Q You said that many of the retirements that happened in the House made it very difficult for --

THE PRESIDENT: Many retirements, yeah.

Q -- that made it very difficult for you in this election cycle, and that it was because they were chairmans, there were chairmanships that were vacated. But Jeff Flake wasn't a chairman of a committee, and Paul Ryan also retired this cycle. So why do you think that is? Whose fault is it that there were so many retirements?

THE PRESIDENT: In Jeff Flake's case, it's me. Pure and simple. I retired him. I'm very proud of it. I did the country a great service.

Go ahead. Give him a -- (laughter). Give him a -- he is retired. I'd like to call it another word, but we're going to treat him with great respect.

Go ahead.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Jeff Flake. That's another beauty.

Go ahead.

Q Two questions, please.

THE PRESIDENT: No, one. One. One. One. Too many people. Sorry.

Q Well, all right. It's all right. You seem to enjoy this venue very much. Are you going to make the standard press conference a staple of the remaining two years?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No.

Q Or will you have more briefings with Sarah Sanders?

THE PRESIDENT: No. You know, when I don't do the -- I think Sarah is fantastic. Where is Sarah? Where is Sarah? Sarah is so great. I think, Sarah, you've represented me so well and been abused. She's been horribly treated by a lot of people.

Q So she's going to stay on as Press Secretary?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. It's very interesting because Sarah was telling -- we were talking about it the other day.

So I had a period where I figured, you know what I'll do? I won't do any real interviews. And then they start saying, "Why doesn't he do -- why?" And they're all coming up with all kinds --

Then over the last couple of months I decided, I'll do a lot -- we'll stop at the helicopter, we'll do this, we'll do a lot of -- and then they say, "Why is he doing so many press conferences? What's wrong? What?"

So when I don't do them, you say, "What's wrong?" When I do do them, you say, "What's wrong?" And when I go in the middle, you say, "What's wrong?" But in the media -- you know that, Jon. Right?

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible) complained about access.

THE PRESIDENT: You're sort of right.

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible) complained about access.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, good.

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. You did. Excuse me. Well, you complained about access when I purposely just stayed away from the press for a while because I wanted to see how it worked. And can I be honest with you? It didn't work well.

Q Mr. President, I did (inaudible) question. So Sarah will stay on as Press Secretary?

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, please. Go ahead. No. Go ahead.

Q Mr. President, first off, I personally think it's very good to have you here because a free press and this type of engagement --

THE PRESIDENT: I do, too. Actually? I do, too.

Q Yes. It's vital to democracy.

THE PRESIDENT: It's called "earned media." It's worth billions. Go ahead.

Q Um, so I have two questions for you, if that's all right? It's a rare opportunity. Um, first, just a point of clarification on the tax returns issue. You brought up the audit. That doesn't prevent you from releasing them.

THE PRESIDENT: I know. Sure. But I didn't say it prevented me, I said lawyers will tell you not to do it. Go ahead. What's your next question? Go ahead.

Q If, well, just on that --

THE PRESIDENT: Come on. Let's go. More exciting question than that, please.

Q Okay. The second one: Michael Cohen recently said you called black voters "stupid."

THE PRESIDENT: That's false.

Q Omarosa has accused you of using the N-word.

THE PRESIDENT: That's false.

Q And the rapper, Lil Jon, has said you called him "Uncle Tom." What's your response?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know who Lil Jon is. I don't -- I really don't.

Q He was on "The Apprentice."

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. Oh, he was? Okay. Oh, I see. I don't know.

Q Have you ever made racist remarks?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No, I would never do that and I don't use racist remarks. And you know what? If I did, you people would've known about it. I've been hearing there are tapes. For years and years, "There are tapes."

Number one, I never worried about it because I never did. I never used racist remarks. I have never used racist remarks.

Okay.

Q Well, one point of fact.

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead.

Q You have been a -- one point of fact, because you told her you have the highest approval --

THE PRESIDENT: Quiet. Quiet.

Q -- amongst African Americans.

THE PRESIDENT: Quiet. Quiet.

Go ahead.

Q It's just 8 percent, sir. Single digits.

THE PRESIDENT: See, when you talk about division, it's people like this that cause division. Great division.

Q Point of fact, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Great -- no. No, point of fact is that I never used a racist remark. That's the point of fact.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Where -- who are you from?

Q I'm from Yahoo! News. (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Yahoo! -- oh, Yahoo! -- oh, good. Good, I hope they're doing well.

Q MTV Lebanon (inaudible). Sir, first question --

THE PRESIDENT: Where are you from?

Q MTV Lebanon. Lebanon.

THE PRESIDENT: Lebanon. Good.

Q Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. We're so happy to be -- as well have this opportunity. Mr. -- President Erdogan said he's not going to follow your sanctions and he's going to keep buying oil from --

THE PRESIDENT: Who said that?

Q President Erdogan. Turkey.

THE PRESIDENT: I know. I know.

Q And you're going to meet him soon --

THE PRESIDENT: I just can't understand his speak --

Q Okay. You're going to meet him soon. You're going to have this talk and some countries are going to take the same steps that President Erdogan is doing and --

THE PRESIDENT: So let me just say about the oil, okay? So we're -- we imposed, just recently, the strongest sanctions in the history of our country, just about. Although I guess North Korea is there, too. But I gave some countries a break on the oil. I did it a little bit because they really asked for some help. But I really did it because I don't want to drive oil prices up to \$100 a barrel or \$150 a barrel, because I'm driving them down.

If you look at oil prices, they've come down very substantially over the last couple of months. That's because of me. Because you have a monopoly called "OPEC." And I don't like -- wait.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: And I don't like that monopoly. I don't like it. And oil prices are coming down.

So rather than deciding to be as tough as I am on most of the sanctions, what I've done is I said, "We're not going to do it that way; we're going to let some of the oil go out to these countries that really do need it because I don't want to drive the oil prices up to \$100 or \$150 a barrel, which could happen very easily. It's a very fragile market. Very, very fragile. I know it very well. And it's the absolute right decision.

And they'll get tougher as time goes by, maybe, but I don't want to have any effect on the oil prices worldwide, where I drive them up. Because I consider that to be a tax, and I don't like taxes.

Go ahead.

Q What happened with the peace process between Israel and Palestine?

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead. Please. Please.

Q The peace process is over?

THE PRESIDENT: Who?

Q It just came out that Jon Tester won --

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, congratulations to Jon Tester. Congratulations. I'm sure you're very unhappy about that.

Go ahead.

Q Mr. President, can --

MS. SANDERS: (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Please, go ahead.

Q Can you address the --

THE PRESIDENT: We'll take a couple of more, and then we'll go.

Q Can you address concerns in places like Georgia where people waited in line to vote for hours, where voting machines weren't working in certain districts, and there hasn't --

THE PRESIDENT: Do you think that's the reason that the candidate lost?

Q Well, there are concerns being raised that it wasn't --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I mean, look, I wasn't involved in Georgia. I wasn't.

Q I know, but are -- but, as President --

THE PRESIDENT: Other than I love the state. I do love the state.

Q Yes, but as President of the United States, are you concerned about the access that people are having to voting?

THE PRESIDENT: I heard it was very efficient in Georgia. I heard it was very efficient. But again, you'd have to ask the state governments because -- just one of those things you're going to have to ask them.

Yeah, go ahead. Please. Please, go ahead.

Q Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President. You expressed some concerns about social media companies unfairly censoring conservatives during the election. Do you anticipate working with Democrats to regulate these companies, or are you satisfied with the way things are?

THE PRESIDENT: I would -- I would do that. Yeah. I would look at that very seriously. I think it's a serious problem. At the same time, you start getting into speech; that's a very dangerous problem. That could be the beginning. So it's very dangerous.

Believe it or not, I'm one that really likes free speech. A lot of people don't understand that. But I am a big believer. And when you start regulating, a lot of bad things can happen.

But I would certainly talk to the Democrats if they want to do that. And I think they do want to do that.

Yes, sir. Go ahead.

Q Former President -- former President Barack Obama famously said that he had "a pen and a phone" to use executive power on issues like immigration. Do you see yourself using executive power to get some of your immigration agenda done?

THE PRESIDENT: I do. I do. I think that some of it I can use executive power -- on some. Not all. But I got -- I mean, he certainly used it.

He used it on DACA. And when he did it, he said something to the effect that "I'm not allowed to do this, it will never hold up, but I'm doing it anyway." And he did it and they found judges that approved it. We also found judges that didn't approve it, so it's obviously going to be determined in the Supreme Court.

And if the Supreme -- if the court rules in favor of what President Obama thinks they should rule -- which is what he said -- then I will probably have a deal with the Democrats in a very short period of time. We were very close to having a deal until we got that very strange ruling.

Q Thank you, sir. You also made some promises about immigration during the campaign, and I want to know if you're going to follow through with them. Are you going to be aggressive --

THE PRESIDENT: Which one are you talking about?

Q Birthright citizenship. Are you going to sign an executive order to ban --

THE PRESIDENT: We are looking at it very seriously. Absolutely.

Q I mean, is it yes or no? Or are you --

THE PRESIDENT: And I believe we have the absolute right. But that's another case that will be determined by the Supreme Court of the United States.

Q Are you going to send 15,000 troops to the border?

THE PRESIDENT: You've been reading the same documents as I have; you know exactly what I'm doing. You know exactly what I'm doing.

So go ahead. What's your next question?

Q Also, on the Khashoggi matter, it's been more than a month since the death of Mr. Khashoggi, the journalist.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. Very sad thing. Very terrible thing.

Q Do you think Saudi Arabia is guilty of having him murdered? And if so, what kind of punishment would be involved?

THE PRESIDENT: I'll have a much stronger opinion on that subject over the next week, and I'm working very closely with Congress. We're working together. Some very talented people. And we're working with Congress, we're working with Turkey, and we're working with Saudi Arabia. And I'm forming a very strong opinion.

Go ahead, Jon. Go ahead, Jon.

Q Mr. President, just a quick follow up. You said something about Nancy Pelosi. You said that Nancy Pelosi, she loves our country. Do you regret some of the things you said during the campaign?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q I mean, at various times, you said Democrats --

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q -- want to put a "wrecking ball...to our future"; they want to "destroy our country."

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I believe that. I believe that. With their current policy, they are using a wrecking ball on our country. I believe that 100 percent. This would be a wrecking ball.

But I think there's a compromise somewhere, and I think that could be really good for our country.

Okay, how about one more?

Q Do you regret the ad? Do you regret the ad that you did that was branded as racist ad and even Fox News wouldn't air it?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't. No. No. No.

Q NBC wouldn't air it, and other networks.

THE PRESIDENT: Do I regret it?

Q Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: Surprised you would ask me that question. I do not.

Go ahead, please.

Q Thank you, sir. And I think we'd all love to have more of these, if you're willing.

In 2017, shortly after you took office, your Homeland Security Department shuttered a program to counter homegrown, right-wing extremism, white supremacy, and related terrorist groups -- domestic terrorist groups; and redirected that funding towards fighting Islamic terrorism. Do you believe that white supremacists, terrorists, right-wing terrorists, these homegrown terrorists on that side of the spectrum are a problem, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, I do. I do believe that's a problem.

Q And what is your administration going to do about it?

THE PRESIDENT: I believe all hate is a problem, but I do believe that is a problem.

Q What are you going to do about it, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: And it's a problem we want to solve.

Q How, sir? What are you going to do about it, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, go ahead.

Q Sir -- sir, what are you going to do about it? You cut off the funding.

Q Mr. President, you've said --

THE PRESIDENT: No, we have given funding for that -- a lot of funding. But I do believe it's a problem. And can I tell you what -- it's a problem that I don't like even a little bit.

Go ahead.

Q Aixa Diaz with Hearst Television. You've said, "Pretend I'm on the ballot" -- yesterday. You called it a referendum on your presidency. Many local districts across the country rejected your midterm message, particularly suburban women. How do you bridge that divide now -- also with the influx of women coming into Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: I think my message was very well received. I mean, just look at the results. Midterm elections are disasters for sitting Presidents and administrations. This has been a very successful -- and, look, you can write it any way

you want. And if you disagree with me -- this has been incredibly success -- when you look at the races. How about Ohio? I didn't even mention. I mentioned Florida; I mentioned Georgia. How about the governor of Ohio? A fantastic --

Q But what's your message to suburban women voters?

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me. Excuse me. Excuse me. A fantastic man, who was down on the polls. And everybody was talking about this person that was so great. And I went up there, and I did a rally, and they have now a great governor -- you're going to have a great governor in Ohio for, hopefully, a long period of time. But for four years. And -- Mike DeWine is a fantastic person.

And I went up there for two reasons: Because I felt that his opposition was not a good person -- and we know a lot about him -- and I felt that Mike was a fantastic person. And he won. And not only did he win, he won easily.

So add that to Florida, and add that to Georgia, and add that to all of the other races that we won -- outside, even, of the Senate races, which were the biggest of all. Because these were races that -- and Mike Pence can tell you, and some of the folks over here can tell you -- these were races that were going to be unopposed. We were not going to oppose certain of the people running -- certain senators. They said they couldn't be beaten. They said Heidi could not be beaten. "Please, don't do it." This was a year out.

Q What about in the suburban districts? How do you get those back?

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me. You -- no, but you're telling me about -- you're telling me about popularity. They said many of these people -- when I said 9 out of 11 -- but I said -- when many of these people -- these weren't like easy races; they were tough races.

And so I think the level of popularity -- the first question I was asked was about, "Well, what have you learned? What about your own popularity?" I think that's what I learned, is -- I was very well received by this great country, by the people of our great country. And I'm very proud of that, because I love the people of this country. These people -- we are the greatest people. I love the people of our country.

Q So what do you say to women, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: And I'll tell you something: When you look at the races that we won in Florida, which we weren't expected to win; and Georgia, which we weren't expected to win; and Ohio, which we weren't expected to win -- and won; I mean, you look at some of them -- the number of votes that we got is incredible.

So I'm really happy with not only the way it came out, but the response to me as your President. And as your President, I made our country safe. I've rebuilt and am in the process of rebuilding our military. And the jobs are here. Every one of them built here. We're going to have the strongest -- very shortly, we're going to have the strongest military our country has ever had.

I've done more for the vets than any President has done, certainly in many, many decades, with Choice and with other things, as you know. With other things.

But our vets are doing better than they've ever done. But if you look at Choice -- Choice alone -- I mean, just take a look at what we've done with Choice. But the people of our country are very happy with the job that I'm doing. And you know, one of the things --

Q But looking ahead to 2020 --

THE PRESIDENT: One of the things -- one of the things that they want so much is security. They want security, both at the border -- they want it with our military; they want it with law enforcement; they want it with ICE.

You know, we've taken out thousands of MS-13 gang members -- thousands out of our -- hard to believe -- thousands -- out of our country. Women of our country, who are incredible people, they want security; they want safety. They want financial security also. We've done that. But they want physical security.

And we've taken out thousands of people that shouldn't be in this country. But we have to get strong immigration laws so they don't come in. We want laws where they don't come in, where we don't have to take them out, per se.

And again, I'm very honored to be with all of you. It was a great day yesterday. It was a great evening. I think we had a tremendous success. And hopefully the tone can get better. Hopefully --

Q How will you change that?

THE PRESIDENT: Hopefully the tone can get a lot better. And I really believe it begins with the media. I really -- we used to call it the "press." But I really --

Q Does it begin with you, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: But I really believe it begins with the media. If you would cover -- and there was a very interesting story written in a very good paper recently that talked about the fact that it isn't good what the media is doing, and that I do have the right to fight back because I'm treated very unfairly.

So I do fight back. And I'm fighting back not for me; I'm fighting back for the people of this country.

Thank you all very much. Thank you.

END 1:24 P.M. EST

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[The White House]
Office of the Press Secretary
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 7, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
IN PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER MIDTERM ELECTIONS

East Room

11:57 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you very much. Please, thank you.

It was a big day yesterday. An incredible day. And last night, the Republican Party defied history to expand our Senate Majority while significantly beating expectations in the House for the midtown and midterm year. We did this in spite of a very dramatic fundraising disadvantage driven by Democrats' wealthy donors and special interests, and very hostile media coverage, to put it mildly. The media coverage set a new record and a new standard.

We also had a staggering number of House retirements. So it's a little tough. These are seats that could've been held pretty easily, and we had newcomers going in, and a lot of them worked very hard. But it's very difficult when you have that many retirements.

We held a large number of campaign rallies with large, large numbers of people going to every one -- and to the best of my knowledge, we didn't have a vacant or an empty seat; I'm sure you would have reported it if you spotted one -- including 30 rallies in the last 60 days. And we saw the candidates that I supported achieve great success last night.

As an example, of the 11 candidates we campaigned with during the last week, 9 won last night. This vigorous campaigning stopped the blue wave that they talked about. I don't know if there ever was such a thing, but could've been. If we didn't do the campaign, probably there could've been. And the history really will see what a good job we did in the final couple of weeks in terms of getting some tremendous people over the finish line. They really are tremendous people, but many of them were not known. But they will be known.

This election marks the largest Senate gains for a President's party in a first midterm election since at least President Kennedy's in 1962.

There have been only four midterm elections since 1934 in which a President's party has gained even a single Senate seat. As of now, we picked up, it looks like, three. Could be four. Perhaps it could be two. But we picked up a lot. And most likely, that number will be three. You people probably know that better than I do at this point, because you've looked at the more recent numbers.

Fifty-five is the largest number of Republican senators in the last 100 years. In the last 80 years, a sitting President's party has only gained a cumulative total of eight Senate seats, averaging one per decade. So, if we picked up two, three, or four, that's a big percentage of that number. So in the last 80 years -- you think of that -- only eight seats.

In President Obama's first midterm election, he lost six Senate seats, including in the deep-blue state of Massachusetts.

Republicans captured at least four Senate seats held by Democrat incumbents. And these are tremendously talented, hardworking people that did this -- Indiana, North Dakota, Florida, Missouri. We also won two open Senate seats in Tennessee -- I want to congratulate our great champion who did such a great job in Tennessee, Marsha -- and in Utah. And Arizona is looking very good. Really, very good. She's done a terrific job. That was a tough race, and she's done a fantastic job.

In each of these open seats, Democrats recruited very strong candidates with substantial fundraising and media support. We were getting bombarded with money on the other side.

In the House, Republicans dramatically outperformed historical precedents and overcame a historic number of retirements -- the most House Republican retirements in 88 years; 43 House Republicans retired.

Now, I will say this -- that, in many cases, they were chairman of committees, and they left because they weren't chairman, because the Republicans have a rule -- for six years. And what that does is wonderful in one way; it lets people come through the system and become chairman. And, in another way, it drives people out. Because when they're a chairman, they don't want to go and not be a chairman. You're the chairman of a committee, and you're a big deal, and then all of a sudden you're not doing that anymore. So they leave. We had a lot of them leave. I guess you can flip a coin as to which system is better. The Democrats do the other. Some of their folks have been in these committees for a long time as chairman.

In 2010, President Obama's first midterm, he lost 63 seats. By contrast, as of the most current count, it looks like around 27 House seats or something. And we'll figure that out pretty soon.

We also had a slew of historic wins in the governors' races -- the governors' races were incredible -- against very well-funded, talented, and skilled Democrat candidates and people that worked very, very hard, respectfully, for those candidates, like Oprah Winfrey, who I like. I don't know if she likes me anymore, but that's okay. She used to. But she worked very hard in Georgia. Very, very hard.

And if you look at them, we won four governors' races crucial to 2020 and the presidential race: Florida, Iowa, Ohio, and Georgia. The big ones: Florida, Iowa, Ohio, and Georgia. Can't get much more important than that. They were incredible. They were actually incredible campaigns, too. Incredible.

As of right now, Republicans will control the majority of governorships across the country, including three great women who worked very hard: the governors of Alabama, South Dakota, and Iowa. They worked very, very hard. They're very talented.

By expanding our Senate majority, the voters have also clearly rebuked the Senate Democrats for their handling of the Kavanaugh hearings. That was a factor. I think maybe a very big factor. The way that was handled, I think, was -- tremendous energy was given to the Republican Party by the way they treated then-Judge Kavanaugh, now Justice Kavanaugh. And expressed their support for confirming more great pro-Constitution judges.

Candidates who embraced our message of low taxes, low regulations, low crime, strong borders, and great judges excelled last night. They excelled. They really -- I mean, we have a list of people that were fantastic, and I'm just going to point them out: Mike Bost; Rodney Davis; Andy Barr was fantastic. I went to Kentucky -- for the most part, I didn't campaign for the House, but I did actually make a special trip for Andy Barr because he was in a very tough race in

Kentucky, and he won. That was a very tough race. The polls were all showing that he was down, and down substantially. And he won. And that one, I did do.

Pete Stauber, of Minnesota. Great guy. He's new and ran a fantastic race.

On the other hand, you had some that decided to "let's stay away." "Let's stay away." They did very poorly. I'm not sure that I should be happy or sad, but I feel just fine about it.

Carlos Curbelo; Mike Coffman -- too bad, Mike; Mia Love. I saw Mia Love. She'd call me all the time to help her with a hostage situation. Being held hostage in Venezuela. But Mia Love gave me no love, and she lost. Too bad. Sorry about that, Mia.

And Barbara Comstock was another one. I mean, I think she could have run that race, but she didn't want to have any embrace. For that, I don't blame her. But she -- she lost. Substantially lost.

Peter Roskam didn't want the embrace. Erik Paulsen didn't want the embrace. And in New Jersey, I think he could have done well, but didn't work out too good.

Bob Hugin, I feel badly because I think that's something that could have been won. That's a race that could have been won. That's a race that could have been won. John Faso.

Those are some of the people that, you know, decided for their own reason not to embrace, whether it's me or what we stand for. But what we stand for meant a lot to most people. And we've had tremendous support, and tremendous support in the Republican Party. Among the biggest support in the history of the party. I've actually heard, at 93 percent, it's a record. But I won't say that, because who knows. But we've had tremendous support.

America is booming like never before. Doing fantastic. We have Larry Kudlow here, and he said the numbers are as good as he's ever seen -- numbers -- at any time for our country. But he's a young man, so he hasn't seen that many numbers. (Laughter.) Where's Larry? You're a young man. Right, Larry? And you haven't been doing this too long, but they're as good as you've ever seen. And we may have -- if you have a question for Larry, we'll do that.

But I want to send my warmest appreciation in regards to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. We really worked very well together. We have been working very well together. We actually have a great relationship. People just don't understand that, which is fine.

And also to, perhaps -- it looks like, I would think -- Speaker Nancy Pelosi. And I give her a lot of credit. She works very hard, and she's worked long and hard. I give her a great deal of credit for what she's done and what she's accomplished.

Hopefully, we can all work together next year to continue delivering for the American people, including on economic growth, infrastructure, trade, lowering the cost of prescription drugs. These are some of things that the Democrats do want to work on, and I really believe we'll be able to do that. I think we're going to have a lot of reason to do it.

And I will say, just as a matter of business, I was with some very successful people last night. We were watching the returns. So if the Republicans won -- and let's say we held on by two, or one, or three -- it would've been very hard out of that many Republicans to ever even get support among Republicans, because there will always be one, or two, or three people that, for a good reason or for a bad reason, or for grandstanding -- we have that too; you've seen that. You've seen that. Plenty of grandstanding. But for certain reasons that many people -- you're always going to have a couple that won't do it. So that puts us in a very bad position.

In other words, had we kept it, and this is no -- I'm saying this for very basic reasons, common sense -- it puts us in a very tough position. We win by one, or two, or three, and you'll have one, or two, or three, or four or five even, come over and say, you know, "Look, we're not going to along with this. We want this, this, this..." And all of a sudden, we can't

even -- we wouldn't even be able to get, in many cases, out of the Republicans' hands before we sent it on to the Senate.

And now we have a much easier path, because the Democrats will come to us with a plan for infrastructure, a plan for healthcare, a plan for whatever they are looking at, and we'll negotiate. And as you know, it's been very hard in the Senate because we need, essentially, 10 votes from Democrats, and we don't get those votes. Because the Democrats do really stick together well. I don't agree with them on a lot of policy, but I agree with them on sticking together. They stick together great.

So now we go into the Senate. We don't have the 10 votes. And what happens? It doesn't get passed. Even if it gets out of the House, it doesn't get passed. So under the new concept of what we're doing, I say, "Come on. Let me see what you have." They want to do things. You know, I keep hearing about investigations fatigue. Like from the time -- almost from the time I announced I was going to run, they've been giving us this investigation fatigue. It's been a long time. They got nothing. Zero. You know why? Because there is nothing.

But they can play that game, but we can play it better. Because we have a thing called the United States Senate. And a lot of very questionable things were done between leaks of classified information, and many other elements that should not have taken place. And all you're going to do is end up in back and forth, and back and forth. And two years is going to go up, and we won't have done a thing.

I really think, and I really respected what Nancy said last night about bipartisanship and getting together and uniting. She used the word "uniting" and she used the word the bipartisanship statement, which is so important because that's what we should be doing. So we can look at us, they can look at us, and we can look at them, and it'll go back and forth. And it'll probably be very good for me politically. I could see it being extremely good politically, because I think I'm better at that game than they are, actually.

But we'll find out. I mean, you know, we'll find out. Or we can work together. You can't do them simultaneously, by the way. Just think if somebody said, "Oh, you can do them both." No, you can't. Because if they're doing that, we're not doing the other, just so you understand. So we won't be doing that.

But now what happens is we send it to the Senate, and we'll get 100 percent Democrat support, and we'll get some Republican support. And if it's good, I really believe we have Republicans that will help with the approval process -- and they will really help with the approval process.

So it really could be a beautiful bipartisan type of situation. If we won by one or two or three, or four or five, that wouldn't happen. And the closer it is, the worse it is. This way, they'll come to me, we'll negotiate. Maybe we'll make a deal, maybe we won't. That's possible. But we have a lot of things in common on infrastructure.

We want to do something on healthcare; they want to do something on healthcare. There are a lot of great things that we can do together. And now we'll send it up and we will really get -- we'll get the Democrats and we'll get the Republicans, or some of the Republicans. And I'll make sure that we send something up that the Republicans can support, and they're going to want to make sure they send something up that the Democrats can support.

So our great country is booming like never before, and we're thriving on every single level, both in terms of economic and military strength; in terms of development. In terms of GDP, we're doing unbelievably.

I will tell you, our trade deals are coming along fantastically. The USMCA and South Korea is finished. USMCA has gotten rave reviews. Not going to lose companies anymore to other countries. They're not going to do that because they have a tremendous economic incentive, meaning it's prohibitive for them to do that.

So it's not going to be like NAFTA, which is one of the worst deals I've ever seen -- although we've made some other pretty bad ones too.

Now is the time for members of both parties to join together, put partisanship aside, and keep the American economic miracle going strong. It is a miracle. We're doing so well. And I've said it at a lot of rallies. Some of you have probably heard it so much you don't want to hear it again. But when people come to my office -- presidents, prime ministers -- they all congratulate me, almost the first thing, on what we've done economically. Because it is really amazing.

And our steel industry is back. Our aluminum industry is starting to do really well. These are industries that were dead. Our miners are working again.

We must all work together to protect our military -- I have to do that -- to support out law enforcement, secure our borders, and advance really great policy, including environmental policy. We want crystal-clean water. We want beautiful, perfect air. Air and water, it has to be perfect.

At the same time, we don't want to put ourselves at a disadvantage to other countries who are very competitive with us and who don't abide by the rules at all. We don't want to hurt our jobs. We don't want to hurt our factories. We don't want companies leaving. We want to be totally competitive, and we are.

And right now we have just about the cleanest air, the cleanest water we've ever had, and it's always going to be that way. We insist on it. So environmental is very important to me.

And with that, I'll take a few questions if you'd like. Woah. (Laughter.) I didn't know what happened.

All right, go ahead, John.

That was a lot of hands shooting up so quickly.

Q There's a lot to talk about.

THE PRESIDENT: There's a lot to talk about.

Q Mr. President, you talked at length just now about bipartisanship. The presumed Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, talked about it last night. I'm sure that's encouraging for the American people. But do you really believe, given what the relationship has been like between this White House and the Democratic Party, that that will happen? Will --

THE PRESIDENT: I think there's a good chance, John. I think there's a very good chance that --

Q If I could just finish --

THE PRESIDENT: -- it will happen.

Q Wil you have to compromise on certain issues to the point where it could hurt you in 2020? And do you expect that when the Democrats take over the chairmanship of all these important committees, you're going to get hit with a blizzard of subpoenas on everything from the Russia investigation --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, then everything is going to come -- okay.

Q -- to your cellphone use, to your tax returns?

THE PRESIDENT: Ready? Then you're going to -- if that happens, then we're going to do the same thing and government comes to a halt. And I would blame them because they now are going to be coming up with policy. They're the majority in the House.

I expect that they will come up with some fantastic ideas that I can support on the environment, on so many different things, including prescription drug prices -- which we've made a big dent in already, including some of the things that we're working on for the vets. We've gotten choice approved. We've gotten a lot of things approved. But they have some other elements that we want.

There are many things we can get along on without a lot of trouble -- that we agree very much with them and they agree with us. I would like to see bipartisanship. I would like to see unity. And I think we have a very good chance of -- and maybe not on everything -- but I think we have a very good chance of seeing that.

Go ahead.

Q One question on the lame duck, sir, and one on your Cabinet. You toyed with the idea during the campaign of a shutdown before the midterms in order to secure border wall funding. Are you prepared to go on a shutdown strategy during a lame duck, since this might be your last, best chance --

THE PRESIDENT: Not necessarily my last chance.

Q -- to secure that?

THE PRESIDENT: Look, I speak to Democrats all the time. They agree that a wall is necessary. Wall is necessary. And as you know, we're building the wall. We've started. But we should build it at one time, not in chunks.

Q But you want much more money, and you want it much sooner.

THE PRESIDENT: No, we need the money to build the wall -- the whole wall -- not pieces of it all over. And we are doing it.

Now we have the military. Now we have other elements of wall that are pretty nasty, to be honest with you. But it's -- nevertheless, it's pretty hard to get through it.

But no, I'd like to see the wall. Many of the people that we'll be dealing with, you know, in 2006, they approved the wall, essentially. It was a very strong border fence, but it was the same thing. And they all approved it; they all agreed. I have statements from every one of them. We have them saying, "We need the wall." I mean, they sound like me.

But we do need it because we have people coming -- and I'm not just talking about the caravans. We have people coming through our border that you physically can't put that many people. It's a 2,000-mile stretch. You can't put that many people along that stretch to guard it. And even if you did, tremendous fighting would ensue.

So we need the wall. Many Democrats know we need the wall. And we're just going to have to see what happens. I mean, we'll be fighting for it. They have done everything in their power to make sure we're -- I got the military \$700 billion and \$716 billion. The wall is a tiny, tiny fraction of the cost of that. But their whole agenda has been to try not giving me anything for the wall.

I really believe, politically, they're hurting themselves. I actually think, politically, that's a good thing for me. But I want to get the wall up because we need it for security.

Q So no shutdown scenario for the mid -- for the lame duck?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I can't tell you that. No, I can't commit to that, but it's possible.

Q And can you give us clarity, sir, on your thinking currently now, after the midterms, about your Attorney General and your Deputy Attorney General? Do they have long-term job security?

THE PRESIDENT: I'd rather answer that at a little bit different time. We're looking at a lot of different things, including Cabinet. I'm very happy with most of my Cabinet. We're looking at different people for different positions. You know, it's very common after the midterms. I didn't want to do anything before the midterms.

But I will tell you that, for the most part, I'm extremely happy with my Cabinet. I think Mike Pompeo has fit in so beautifully. He's done an incredible job as --

Q How about your Interior Secretary?

THE PRESIDENT: We're looking at that, and I want -- I do want to study whatever is being said. I think he's doing --

Q Is he in jeopardy?

THE PRESIDENT: I think he's doing an excellent job, but we will take a look at that in a very strong -- and we'll probably have an idea about that in about a week.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay? Thank you.

Wow, this is --

Go ahead, Jon. He gave me a fair interview the other day, so I might as well ask him a question.

Q All right, thank you, Mr. President. And picking up there, you told me the other day that you are an "open book." So --

THE PRESIDENT: I think I am an open book.

Q So point blank, if Democrats go after your tax returns, will you try to block that or will you allow them to have it?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, look, as I have told you, they're under audit. They have been for a long time. They're extremely complex. People wouldn't understand them. They're done by among the biggest and best law firms in the country. Same thing with the accounting firms. The accountants are -- a very, very larger, powerful firm, from the standpoint of respect. Highly respected. Big firm. A great law firm. You know it very well. They do these things; they put them in. But people don't understand tax returns.

Now, I did do a filing of over 100 pages, I believe, which is in the offices. And when people went and saw that filing and they saw the magnitude of it, they were very disappointed. And they saw the -- you know, the detail. You'd get far more from that. And I guess we filed that now three times. But you get far more from that than you could ever get from a tax return.

But when you're under audit -- and I'm on under very continuous audit because there are so many companies, and it is a very big company -- far bigger than you would even understand. But it's a great company, but it's big and it's complex. And it's probably feet high. It's a very complex instrument.

And I think that people wouldn't understand it. But if I were finished with the audit, I would have an open mind to it. I would say that. But I don't want to do it during the audit. And, really, no lawyer -- even from the other side, they say often -- not always -- but when you're under audit, you don't have -- you don't subject it to that. You get it done, and then you release it.

So when that happens, if that happens, I would certainly have an open mind to it.

Q So that means that if the audit is still on, you will not turn over the tax returns, or you'll fight to block it?

THE PRESIDENT: When it's under audit -- no, nobody would. Nobody turns over a return when it's under audit, okay?

Yeah, go ahead. Please.

Q One, I was tempted to ask you why you like Oprah so much, but I think I'll go on to the question that --

THE PRESIDENT: Why do I like Oprah?

Q (Laughs.)

THE PRESIDENT: What kind of a question is that?

Q I'm just asking. Just curious. But the real question --

THE PRESIDENT: He's a comedian here.

Q The real question is --

THE PRESIDENT: I do like Oprah, by the way. I do. She was a person I knew well. Came to my place in Palm Beach often. And I have a lot of respect for her. Unfortunately, she didn't do the trick.

Q The real question is, you just said up here, and said from this podium, that it's -- are you offering a my-way-or-highway scenario to the Democrats? You're saying --

THE PRESIDENT: No. Negotiation. Not at all.

Q -- that if -- if they start investigating you, that you can play that game and investigate them.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yeah. Better than them.

Q Can you compartmentalize that --

THE PRESIDENT: And I think I know more -- and I think I know more than they know.

Q Can you compartmentalize that and still continue to work with them for the benefit of the rest of the country? Or are you --

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Are all bets off?

THE PRESIDENT: No. If they do that, then it's just -- all it is, is a warlike posture.

Yeah, go ahead.

Q And so then the -- wait a minute, then the follow-up then --

THE PRESIDENT: You heard my answer. Go ahead.

Q Well, since it's Jim, I'll let it go.

Q Okay. Thank you, Mr. President. I wanted to challenge you on one of the statements that you made in the tail end of the campaign in the midterms, that this --

THE PRESIDENT: Here we go.

Q Well, if you don't mind, Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: Let's go. Let's go. Come on.

Q That this caravan was an "invasion." As you know, Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: I consider it to be an invasion.

Q As you know, Mr. President, the caravan was not an invasion. It's a group of migrants moving up from Central America towards the border with the U.S.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you for telling me that. I appreciate it.

Q Why did you characterize it as such? And --

THE PRESIDENT: Because I consider it an invasion. You and I have a difference of opinion.

Q But do you think that you demonized immigrants in this election --

THE PRESIDENT: Not at all. No, not at all.

Q -- to try to keep --

THE PRESIDENT: I want them -- I want them to come into the country, but they have to come in legally. You know, they have to come in, Jim, through a process. I want it to be a process.

And I want people to come in. And we need the people.

Q Right. But your campaign had -- your campaign --

THE PRESIDENT: Wait. Wait. Wait. You know why we need the people, don't you? Because we have hundreds of companies moving in. We need the people.

Q Right. But your campaign had an ad showing migrants climbing over walls and so on.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that's true. They weren't actors. They weren't actors.

Q They're not going to be doing that.

THE PRESIDENT: They weren't actors. Well, no, it was true. Do you think they were actors? They weren't actors. They didn't come from Hollywood. These were -- these were people -- this was an actual -- you know, it happened a few days ago. And --

Q They're hundreds of miles of way though. They're hundreds and hundreds of miles away.

THE PRESIDENT: You know what?

Q That's not an invasion.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you should -- honestly, I think you should let me run the country, you run CNN --

Q All right.

THE PRESIDENT: -- and if you did it well, your ratings would be much better.

Q But let me ask, if I -- if I may ask one other question --

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, that's enough.

Q Mr. President, if I may -- if I may ask one other question.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, Peter, go ahead.

Q Are you worried --

THE PRESIDENT: That's enough. That's enough. That's enough.

Q Mr. President, I didn't -- well, I was going to ask one other. The other folks that had --

THE PRESIDENT: That's enough. That's enough.

Q Pardon me, ma'am, I'm -- Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me, that's enough.

Q Mr. President, I had one other question if --

THE PRESIDENT: Peter. Let's go.

Q -- I may ask on the Russia investigation. Are you concerned that you may have indictments --

THE PRESIDENT: I'm not concerned about anything with the Russia investigation because it's a hoax.

Q -- that you may indictments coming down? Are you --

THE PRESIDENT: That's enough. Put down the mic.

Q Mr. President, are you worried about indictments coming down in this investigation?

Q Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: I'll tell you what: CNN should be ashamed of itself having you working for them. You are a rude, terrible person. You shouldn't be working for CNN.

Go ahead.

Q I think that's unfair.

THE PRESIDENT: You're a very rude person. The way you treat Sarah Huckabee is horrible. And the way you treat other people are horrible. You shouldn't treat people that way.

Go ahead. Go ahead, Peter. Go ahead.

Q In Jim's defense, I've traveled with him and watched him. He's a diligent reporter who busts his butt like the rest of us.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'm not a big fan of yours either. So, you know.

(Laughter.)

Q I understand.

THE PRESIDENT: To be honest with you.

Q So let me -- so let me ask you a question if I can --

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: You aren't -- you aren't the best.

Q You repeatedly said -- Mr. President, you repeatedly -- over the course of the --

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible) called the enemy of the people --

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, just sit down, please.

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible) campaign (inaudible) and sent pipe bombs. That's just (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: Well, when you report fake news --

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: No. When you report fake news, which CNN does a lot, you are the enemy of the people.

Go ahead.

Q Mr. President, over the course -- over the course of the last several days of the campaign, sir -- sir, at the end of the campaign, you repeatedly said that Americans need to fear Democrats. You said Democrats would "unleash a wave of violent crime that endangers families everywhere." Why are you pitting Americans --

THE PRESIDENT: Because they're very weak on crime.

Q -- why are you pitting Americans against one another, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me. Peter. Peter, what are you -- trying to be him?

Q No, I'm just asking a question.

THE PRESIDENT: Peter, just let me just -- let me just tell you, very simple: Because they're very weak on crime. Because they have often suggested -- members and people within the Democrat Party, at a high level, have suggested getting rid of ICE, getting rid of law enforcement. That's not going to happen, okay?

We want to be strong on the borders. We want to be strong on law enforcement. And I want to -- I want to cherish ICE because ICE does a fantastic job. The -- what they do for us is so -- really, it's so unrecognized how good a job they do.

So we want to take care of them, and we want to hold them very close because they do a good job.

Q But the question, to be clear --

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, yeah, go ahead.

Q -- to be clear, though, the question, sir, is, why are you --

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Sit. Sit down, Peter.

Q -- but the question -- but you didn't answer my question. Just very simply, the question is, why are you pitting Americans against one another, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm not.

Q Is that how you view citizens of this country?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I'm not. Well, look, I'll tell you what -- we won a lot of elections last night. We did very well last night, and I think it's going to have --

Q But in many ways, it divided the country.

THE PRESIDENT: -- I think it's going to have a very positive impact. I watched NBC this morning; they didn't report it exactly correctly, but that's, you know, very, very -- that's the fact with NBC. Nothing I can do about that.

But I want this country to have protection. We want security in our country. I want security, Peter. I mean, you maybe don't think it's so important. And I think when you don't have it, you are indeed unleashing crime. I feel that.

Go ahead. Go ahead.

Q You said you would sign an executive order on birthright citizenship. Are you still going to sign the executive order on birthright citizenship?

THE PRESIDENT: You will answer -- you'll ask me that question a little bit later.

Go ahead.

Q Okay.

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead. Sure.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. The investigation by the Special Counsel, Robert Mueller, has been going on since last spring. It's been over --

THE PRESIDENT: It's been a long time.

Q Yeah, it's been over your head, over Republicans' head during the midterms as well. Is this an opportunity for you, Mr. President, to end that investigation? Would you consider removing Mr. Mueller from his position?

THE PRESIDENT: I could have ended it anytime I wanted. I didn't. And there was so collusion. There was no anything. I didn't.

They went after hackers in Moscow. I don't know about that. They went after people with tax problems, from years ago. They went after people with loans and other things. Had nothing to do with my campaign.

This is a investigation where many, many millions of dollars has been spent. And there's no collusion. It was supposed to be on collusion. There's no collusion. And I think it's -- I think it's very bad for our country, I will tell you. I think it's a shame.

And a poll came out today -- by the way, from NBC -- or least I saw it on NBC -- where a majority of the people do not agree with the Mueller investigation, or it wasn't approved. They have approval and disapproval, and it had a much higher disapproval.

It should end because it's very bad for our country. It's --

Q So if it's bad --

THE PRESIDENT: -- and I'm not just talking about the tremendous expense. And the other thing is, they should look at the other side also. They only look at one side. They're not looking at all of the things that came up during this investigation. They don't do that.

They should also get people that can be fair, not 13 or 14 or 17 -- I call them the "Angry Democrats." They are angry people. And it's a very unfair thing for this country. It's a very, very -- forget about unfair to me; it's very bad for our country.

Q So, Mr. President, if it's un --

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead. No, no, no. Please.

Q Mr. President, just to make the point -- if it's unfair to the country and it's costing millions of dollars, why don't you just end it?

THE PRESIDENT: Give him the mic, please. I've answered the question.

Q Okay.

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead, take the -- take the mic.

Q Voter suppression -- Mr. President, voter suppression.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'll give you voter -- I will give you voter suppression. You just have to -- sit down, please.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Sit down. I didn't call you. I didn't call you. I didn't call you.

I'll give you voter suppression: Take a look at the CNN polls, how inaccurate they were. That's called voter suppression.

Go ahead, please.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

Q In Georgia, sir? In Georgia?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm not -- I'm not responding. I'm responding to --

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me, I'm not responding to you. I'm talking to this gentleman. Will you please sit down?

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Would --

Q (Inaudible) but you said (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me. Excuse me. Would you please sit down?

Please, go ahead.

Q Thank you, Mr. President, now that the -- now that the House of Representatives has --

THE PRESIDENT: Very hostile -- such a hostile media. It's so sad. You ask me about --

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: No. You rudely interrupted him.

Q You responded (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: You rudely interrupted him.

Go ahead.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Do your demands remain the same to the United States Congress on immigration in exchange for a DACA fix? In exchange for an amnesty for 1.7 million, are you willing to change any of those demands that you gave to Congress earlier?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we could really do something having to do with DACA. And what really happened with DACA -- we could have done some pretty good work on DACA. But a judge ruled that DACA was okay. Had the judge not ruled that way, I think we would have made a deal. Once the judge ruled that way, the Democrats didn't want to talk anymore. So we'll see how it works out at the Supreme Court.

Go ahead.

Q Will you take questions from the international media --

THE PRESIDENT: From where?

Q From the international media.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, go ahead. Go ahead.

Q Afghanistan, Mr. President. Afghanistan --

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead. Which group? Where do you want me to take a question from? Go ahead, ma'am. Go ahead. Take the --

Either one. Either one.

Q Okay. (Laughs.)

THE PRESIDENT: Or both. Are you together? Go ahead.

Q We're not together. Mr. President, how do you respond to critics who say that your message on the campaign with minorities have been polarizing?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think it has been at all.

Q But is the election of two Muslim women -- one of them is veiled to the House, which is making history. Is this a rebuke of this message, do you think?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't understand what you're saying. What?

Q Is it a rebuke of this message? Do you think that this is more reflective of multiethnic and multicultural America?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that question -- I can only say this: If you look at the employment and unemployment numbers for African Americans, for Asian Americans, for Hispanic Americans, they're at a historic high. A poll came out recently where my numbers with Hispanics and with African Americans are the highest -- the best they've ever been. That had -- that took place two or three days ago, the poll.

I have the best numbers with African American and Hispanic American that I've ever had before. And you saw the same poll. So, I can't say that. I can say this: If you look at median income, you look at all of the employment and unemployment numbers, they're doing the best they've ever done. And it reflects -- it really is very reflective in the polls.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, go ahead.

Q Mr. President, I'm from Brooklyn, so you'll understand me.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. I understand you very well.

Q My question is on healthcare. How is it possible to keep premiums down and cover preexisting conditions without the individual mandate to fund it?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, what we're doing -- and we're -- if you look at the Department of Labor also -- Secretary separately -- Secretary Azar, what they've done. They've come up with some incredible healthcare plans, which is causing great competition and driving the prices right down.

But we are getting rid of the individual mandate because it was very unfair to a lot of people. But at the same time, we're covering the people that need it. But the individual mandate was a disaster because people that couldn't necessarily afford it were having to pay for the privilege of not having to pay for healthcare. And it was bad healthcare, at that.

So we are working many plans for healthcare. We're creating tremendous competition. We had Obamacare repealed and replaced. Unfortunately, one person changed his mind at the last moment. And we had no Democrat support. I have to say that. We didn't have one vote. We would have repealed it, replaced it. We would have had a large-scale, very good healthcare plan. Now we're doing it a different way. We're doing it a different way.

But getting rid of the individual mandate is a very, very popular thing and a very important thing. And people very much appreciate it.

Go ahead.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. That's enough.

Go ahead, please.

Q Thank you, sir. Two questions: One, I know you went through the results and you obviously studied them late last night. What lesson did you learn most from looking at those results? Was there one thing that, as you kind of reviewed them, that you'll change your strategy not just for Congress, but kind of going forward?

And then just a follow-up question.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think the results that I've learned, and maybe confirm, I think people like me. I think people like the job I'm doing, frankly. Because if you look at every place I went to do a rally, I couldn't do it with everybody. But -- and it was very hard to do it with people in Congress because there are just too many -- it will be too many stops.

But I did it with the Senate. I did it with Andy Barr, as you know. And -- and he won. He won a very tough race against McGrath.

It was a very, very tough race in Kentucky, and he was down quite a bit. And I went there, and we had a tremendous, very successful -- some of you were at that rally. And he won that race.

But I could only do that so much because there are just so many players involved. But I did focus on the Senate, and we had tremendous success with the Senate. Really tremendous success.

Q Can I ask you one more -- one more question, sir. Mr. President, one more question, if you don't mind. I'm so sorry, sir. It's a rare opportunity.

A lot of people are going to be rushing to Iowa, rushing to New Hampshire. You know that the Democrats are already looking ahead to 2020. Do you want to lock down your ticket right now, sir? Will the Vice President be your running mate in 2020?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I haven't asked him, but I hope so. Where are you? (Laughter.)

Mike, will you be my running mate? (Laughter.) Huh? Stand up, Mike, please. Raise your right hand. No, I'm only kidding. (Laughter.) Will you? Thank you, okay good. (Applause.) The answer is "yes." Okay?

Q Thank you, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: That was unexpected, but I feel very fine.

Yeah, please.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Going back to the Russia investigation and the potential investigations from the now-Democratic majority in Congress, some say that you could stop all this by declassifying --

THE PRESIDENT: I could. I could fire everybody right now. But I don't want to stop it, because politically, I don't like stopping it. It's a disgrace. It should have never been started because there was no crime. It is -- everybody has conflicts. They all have conflicts over there that are beyond anything that anybody has ever seen in terms of conflicts -- from the fact that people ask for jobs; from the fact that they have very good friends on the other side, like really good friends, like Comey -- who, by the way, lied and leaked, and also leaked classified information. Nothing happened there. It might, perhaps. Maybe something is happening that I don't know about.

I stay away from it. But do you know what I do? I let it just go on. They're wasting a lot of money, but I let it go on because I don't want to do that. But you're right -- I could end it right now. I could say that investigation is over.

But it's -- it's really -- it's a disgrace, frankly. And it's an embarrassment to our country. It's an embarrassment to the people of our country. And it's too bad.

Go ahead.

Q What about the declassification of the documents? Some say that that would clear it all up.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're looking at that.

Q Are you still considering it?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. We're looking at that very seriously. Declassification? We're looking at that very seriously.

Q Okay. Can I ask one more question?

THE PRESIDENT: It's amazing how people on the other side just don't want those documents declassified. But, no, we're looking at that very carefully. I certainly wanted to wait until after the midterms.

Q Can I ask you one more question, Mr. President? Okay, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. You have campaigned as a pro-life President. You have defended the rights of unborn children. You now have a divided Congress. It's unlikely to pass --

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. Tough.

Q -- to pass any pro-life bills.

THE PRESIDENT: Very tough issue.

Q How are you going to push forward your pro-life agenda?

THE PRESIDENT: Just going to push. I've been pushing. I've done a very good job, too. Very happy with me. But it's a tough issue for the two sides. There's no question about it.

Q But what are you going to do to --

THE PRESIDENT: There is great division -- what am I going to do? I won't be able to explain that to you, because it is an issue that is a very divisive, polarizing issue. But there is a solution. I think I have that solution, and nobody else does.

We're going to be -- we're going to be working on that.

Yes, go ahead, please. She took your place, but that's okay.

Q Mr. President, just a quick question on rural America. In states like Indiana and North Dakota, folks turned out for Republican candidates. Could you talk a little bit about what this means for your agenda in terms of trade and the farm bill?

THE PRESIDENT: The farm bill is working really well. I mean, we could have had it approved any time. But we're looking to get work rules approved. The farmers want it. I'd like it. The problem is, the Democrats are not giving us the 10 votes that we need.

We are -- everybody wants it. The farmers want it. But the Democrats are not approving the farm bill with work rules. We could have it very fast without the work rules, but we want the work rules in, and the Democrats just don't want to vote for that. So, at some point, they'll have to pay maybe a price.

Jeff, go ahead.

Q Thank you very much, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

Q Have you seen any evidence that Russia or China intervened in yesterday's election?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we've going -- we're going to make a full report. And unlike the previous administration, we've done a lot of work on that issue. And if you look -- speak with the FBI, speak with the Department of Justice, speak to Homeland Security, we've spent a lot of time. It gets very little coverage in the papers. I mean, you cover the nonsense part, but you don't cover the important. This is very important.

And we have been working very hard on China and Russia, and everybody else, looking into our elections or meddling with our elections. But people tend not to write about it. But we have worked very hard, as you probably heard.

Q What do you -- what do you intend to say, sir, to President Xi and to President Putin when you meet with them later this month?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I have a good relationship with both. I know President Xi better. But I think I have a very good relationship with both. I actually had a very good meeting in Russia that you people didn't agree with, but that's okay. It doesn't much matter, obviously. Because here I am.

Q You mean Helsinki?

THE PRESIDENT: But the fact is that I had a very, very good meeting -- a very, very good meeting with President Putin, and a lot was discussed about security, about Syria, about Ukraine, about the fact that President Obama allowed a very

large part of Ukraine to be taken. Right now, you have submarines off that particular parcel that we're talking about. You know what I'm talking about.

Q That was President Putin who annexed Crimea, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: That was President Obama's regime. That was during President Obama. Right? That was not during me. No, that was President Obama --

Q But it was President Putin who did the annexation.

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. It was President Obama that allowed it to happen. It had nothing to do with me.

Yeah. Go ahead. Go ahead. Go ahead.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Cordelia Lynch, Sky News. You're a man who likes to win, but last night was not an absolute victory for you.

THE PRESIDENT: I'll be honest: I thought it was a -- I thought it was a very close to complete victory. When you look at it from the standpoint of negotiation, when you look at it from the standpoint of deal making -- because it's all about deal making -- again, if we had the majority, and we had one or two or three votes to play with, we would never -- we would have been at a standstill.

I really believe that we have a chance to get along very well with the Democrats. And if that's the case, we can do a tremendous amount of legislation and get it approved by both parties.

So I consider it to be -- hey, look, I won Georgia. President Obama campaigned very hard in Georgia. Oprah Winfrey campaigned very, very hard. All over the television. I said this is going to be tough. I only had me. I didn't have anybody else. And I went to Georgia, and we had one of the largest crowds that anybody here has seen, ever, at a political rally. And you know what? He won. And he won actually by, you know, pretty good margin. He won.

And then we went to Florida, and they had celebrities all over the place. And a man, who happens to be very smart person, was running -- Ron DeSantis. And people didn't give him a chance. And I went and we had -- we did some great work. And they're going to have a great governor of the state of Florida.

And then we talked about the Senate, and a lot of money was pouring in for the Democrat. This is a man who's been in office for like 44 years or something. This is man who was like a professional at getting elected and being in office. So he's not -- Bill Nelson -- not easy to beat. Okay? And -- but they had a lot of celebrities coming out for Nelson. They had everybody coming out for Nelson. And Rick Scott won. And I helped him.

And I think we've done an amazing job. And you could look at many other places -- if you just take a look at some of the other places. And we just got the word that, in Iowa, you have a governor who just got extended, who's -- Kim just got extended. And numerous other places.

I think it was a great victory. I'll be honest: I think it was a great victory. And actually, some of the news this morning was that it was, in fact, a great victory.

But if you look at it from the standpoint of gridlock, I really believe there's going to be much less gridlock because of the way this is going, than any other way.

Q Mr. President, a quick follow-up on that.

THE PRESIDENT: Sit down, please.

Go ahead.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Let me ask you about one of the campaign promises you made down the stretch, which was a 10 percent tax cut for the middle class. You just talked about gridlock. Democrats, they now run the House Ways and Means Committee. If it means a tax cut of some kind for the middle class, but that means raising rates elsewhere -- corporations, on the wealthiest -- is that a trade-off that you would be willing to make, and able to enact a middle-class tax cut?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it could be. You know that this will have to be now proposed. Because if we did it now, we don't have the votes in the Senate. You don't have -- we need -- we would need 10 Democrat vote; we probably couldn't get them. If we could, we could pass it very easily in the House. But there's no reason to waste time because you don't have the votes in the Senate.

But if the -- as an example, if the Democrats come up with an idea for tax cuts, which I'm a big believer in tax cuts, I would absolutely pursue something even if it means some adjustment.

Q Some adjustment on which side? The corporate? The individual?

THE PRESIDENT: Some adjustment. Yeah, to make it possible. But I would love to see a tax cut for the middle class. Now, that's going to be their decision. They're going to have to make that decision.

As you know, if we bring it up to the Senate, we'd need Democrat votes -- 10 -- and we don't have those 10 votes.

Q And just because the markets would -- and just because the markets would want to know, sir -- some adjustment, would that be one, two, three percent on either side?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I'm not telling you that. I'm just saying, I would be certainly willing to do a little bit of an adjustment.

Go ahead. Behind me. Go ahead, please.

Q Mr. President, thank you very much. Two questions. One is, you had talked about leaders who had called to congratulate you. Did President Putin call to congratulate you? And will you, in fact, meet with him at lunch this coming weekend?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, as I understand it, we're having -- and I guess a lot of you are going over. We're having a lunch for numerous countries. I'll be there. I believe President Putin is going to be there. We don't have anything scheduled. I don't think we have anything scheduled in Paris. And I'm coming back very quickly.

We're going over -- there's a great event. This is an important -- really, it's going to be very important and, I think, a very beautiful ceremony. I'm looking forward to going. And we're representing the incredible heroes of the world, but the heroes of our country from World War I. And so I'll be going there, and I am very proud to go there.

Q And did he call you?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think we have time set aside for that meeting.

Now, with that being said, we're very shortly meeting again at the G20, where he'll be there and I'll be there. And that's where we're actually looking forward to meeting.

We will be having -- we will be having a lunch, but I think there are many people there.

Q And did he call you to congratulate you? And if I could also just invite you, since this is quite a gathering we've got here, to go ahead and talk about the staff changes that you expect in the White House, while we're here. We're eager to hear about them. Is General Kelly going to stay on?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think what I'll do is -- as we make changes, we'll sit down and talk to you about it. I mean, there's no great secret. A lot of administrations make changes after midterms. I will say that, for the most part, I'm very, very happy with this Cabinet. We're doing a great job.

Q But what about in the White House? What about in the White House, sir? You've got a lot White House staff. Some have been talking about leaving. General Kelly has been rumored to be leaving. Is he?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that's okay. No, people leave. People leave.

Q And is that going to happen, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: People leave. I haven't heard about John Kelly. But, no, people -- people leave. They come in, they're here. It's a very exhausting job. Although, I love doing it, I must tell you. But it's exhausting for a lot of people. I'm surprised at a lot of people. They start off, they're young people, they're there for two years, and they're old by the time they leave. (Laughter.) It's quite exhausting. But I love doing it.

And I'll tell you, there will be changes. Nothing monumental from that standpoint. I don't think very much different than most administrations. But -- and we have -- I mean, we have many people lined up for every single position. Any position. Everybody wants to work in this White House. We are a hot country. This is a hot White House. We are a White House that people want to work with.

Okay. No, no. Please. Behind you. Behind you. Go ahead.

Q Mr. President, this has been a very challenging campaign. It is -- this has been a very challenging campaign.

THE PRESIDENT: It's been a very challenging campaign. That's true.

Q It has involved quite of a lot of abuse and a lot of violence. People have died during the course of this campaign.

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

Q Is there any way in which you think the temperature could be lowered? Perhaps peace could break out with the media? Perhaps you bipartisan relationships across the House and the Senate may now produce some change. Or are we going to have more of the same?

THE PRESIDENT: It's a very fair question. Look, I would love to see unity and peace and love, and any other word you want to use. And obviously, I think we had to, especially at this particular juncture, we had to wait until after the midterms were over. Now they're over.

If they would cover me fairly -- which they don't. Which they don't. I'm not saying that in a hostile way. I get extremely inaccurate coverage. I can do something that's fantastic, and they'll make it look like not good. And I don't mind being - - having bad stories. If I make a mistake, cover it. I would like you to cover it fairly, but cover it.

But when you do something terrific -- look how little the economy is talked about. A poll came out this morning talking about how little the three networks -- I don't think they included CNN -- but how little the three networks talk about how good the economy is. How little. Almost not at all.

If President Obama had this economy -- and, by the way, if that administration, through somebody else, kept going, you would have had negative 4.2 instead of positive 4.2 percent growth. You would have had negative. It was heading down.

But here -- the point is this --

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me. I would love to see unity, including with the media. Because I think the media -- I'll be honest: I think it's a very divisive thing for our country. And you would be amazed at how smart people are that are reading your stories and seeing your stories and watching. You would be amazed how perceptive and how smart they are. They get it. And it really does bring disunity.

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me. You are not -- you are not called on.

Q Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead. Go ahead. Go ahead, please.

Q Thank you, President Trump. Shortly after your victory speech on the historic night of -- back in November 2016, I asked you to what single factor you most attributed this victory to.

THE PRESIDENT: Say it? You have to speak up.

Q Sure. On the night of your victory, I asked you, right after your speech, to what you would attribute your victory. You pointed up to the ceiling, and you said that it was God. Based off of that, how would you say, over the last two years, God plays -- what kind of a factor He plays in the day-to-day execution of the Office of the Presidency?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, God plays a big factor in my life, and God plays a factor in the lives of many people that I know very well in this room, like your Vice President. God plays a very big role in my life.

Q And one more -- one more back to -- a quick one. Quick follow-up. Which loss last night surprised you the most? And which of these unsuccessful candidates are you most likely to consider for a future administration?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing surprises me in politics.

Q Would you consider any --

THE PRESIDENT: But there were some losses last night. And there were some victories last night that have been incredible. I mean, there were victories last night that nobody would believe, especially based on the suppression polls. They had a lot of suppression polls.

Q Would you consider any --

THE PRESIDENT: And there were some victories last night that were very surprising, but I'm not going to pick out special -- you know, special people.

Q Would you consider any for a post?

THE PRESIDENT: It's tough enough for those people to have a loss.

Q Would you consider any for an administration post, moving forward? As one of the very few of the 3.7 percent unemployed --

THE PRESIDENT: Would I what? What?

Q Would you consider any of the people who lost last night for a post in the administration in the near future?

THE PRESIDENT: I know a couple of very good ones. Yeah, I would, actually.

Go ahead, please.

Q Mr. President -- Mr. President, I asked you on Monday if there was anything that you regret in your first two years. And you said that, at times, you could have and should have used a, quote, "softer tone." Your critics, as you can imagine -- your skeptics -- they say they're not holding their breath on that happening. Will you indeed have to change your tone if you're to get things passed through Congress after losing the House?

And you also said you might extend an olive branch. What would that look like?

THE PRESIDENT: I would love to have -- I would love to have -- I'd be very good at a low tone. But when things are done not correctly about you -- written about you, said about you on television, on wherever it is -- you have to defend yourself.

I would love to do a very -- a very even tone. It's much easier than what I have to do. I have to go around. And going around is much easier than facing somebody and being treated fairly. But when you're not treated fairly, you really have no choice.

I would love to have a very even, modest, boring tone. I would be very honored by that. But you know what? When you have to fight -- all the time fight -- because you're being misrepresented by the media, you really can't do that.

Q But not about the media, sir. But, sir, real quickly -- not about the media, but what about with Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, please. Go ahead.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us how you focus on the economic --

THE PRESIDENT: Where are you from, please?

Q Japan. Prime Minister Abe.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Say hello. Say hello to Shinzo.

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: I'm sure he's happy about tariffs on his cars. Go ahead.

Q That's my question, actually. So how you focus on the trade and economic issues with Japan? Will you ask Japan to do more? Will you change your tone?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't -- I really don't understand you.

Q How would you focus on trade and economic --

THE PRESIDENT: Trade with Japan?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're dealing with Japan right now on trade. Japan has -- it's a great country. You have a great Prime Minister who just had a very successful election. He's a very good friend of mine. He's one of the people I'm closest with.

And -- but I tell him all the time that Japan does not treat the United States fairly on trade. They send in millions of cars at a very low tax. They don't take our cars. And if they do, they have a massive tax on their cars.

Japan -- and I'm not blaming Japan; I'm blaming the people that were in charge of the United States for allowing that to happen.

But as you know, we have close to \$100 billion trade deficit with Japan. And Japan has treated us very unfairly. But don't feel lonely because you weren't the only one.

Q How about North Korea? How about North Korea?

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Two international questions. The first one: Secretary Pompeo's talks with North Korea have been postponed. What is happening there?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, nothing --

Q And will your meeting still happen with --

THE PRESIDENT: No, we're going to change it because of trips that are being made. We're going to make it at another date. But we're very happy how it's going with North Korea. We think it's going fine. We're in no rush. We're in no hurry. The sanctions are on.

Q You still expect to meet Kim Jong Un?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. Listen. Excuse me. Wait.

Q Sorry, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: The sanctions are on. The missiles have stopped. The rockets have stopped. The hostages are home. The great heroes have been coming home.

Mike Pence was in Hawaii, where the -- one of the most beautiful ceremonies that anyone has ever seen for the fallen. These are great heroes. Very important. When I was running, a lot of people -- as many years ago as it was -- in many cases, grandchildren -- but they were asking about that. They're coming home and they're being provided to us as we speak.

But I'm in no rush. I'm in no rush. The sanctions are on. I read a couple of times, and I've seen a few times where they said, "He's done so much." What have I done? I met.

Now, I'd love to take the sanctions off. But they have to be responsive, too. It's a two-way street.

But we're not in any rush at all. There's no rush whatsoever. You know, before I got here, they were dealing with this for over 70 years. And I guess, on a nuclear front, for 25 years. That's a long time.

I've been there; I probably left Singapore four or five months ago. And we made more progress in that four or five months than they've made in 70 years. And nobody else could have done what I've done.

But I'll say this -- I'll say this very simply: We're in no rush. The sanctions are on. And whenever it is -- but that meeting is going to be rescheduled.

Q That meeting -- but about your meeting with Kim Jong Un, sir, will it happen in the next months?

THE PRESIDENT: Sometime next year, I would say.

Q Sometime next year?

THE PRESIDENT: Sometime -- sometime early next year. Yeah.

Q And a quick question on the USMCA. Now that it's been concluded, have you repaired your relationship with Prime Minister Trudeau?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I have. We have a very good relationship.

Q Thank you very much, Mr. President. We've been talking a lot about division and the division that exists in this country right now.

THE PRESIDENT: True. That's true.

Q And some of the statistics are disturbing, I think, to just about everyone. Anti-Semitic incidents have increased by 57 percent since 2016. Hate crimes are on the rise. Why do you think that is? And what will you do about it as President?

THE PRESIDENT: It's very sad to see it. I hate to see it. And, as you know, I've done more -- in fact, if you were with us the last time we met, Prime Minister Netanyahu said that, "This President has done more for Israel than any other President." Those words. Those exact words.

Jerusalem, protection, working together -- so many different things. But the big thing is Jerusalem. You know, many, many President have said they are going to build the embassy in Jerusalem. Never happened. Making it the capital of Israel -- never happened. Never happened. But it happened with me, and quickly.

And not only did it happen, we built the embassy. That would have taken another 15 or 20 years and cost probably billions of dollars, and we did it for a tiny amount of money. It's already done. It's open.

Nobody has done more for Israel than Donald Trump. And the nice part is that's not me saying it; that's Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Q But what about the -- Mr. President, what about the divides in this country? Mr. President, what about healing the divides in this country -- addressing those issues, specifically?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we want to see -- we want to see it healed. And one of the things I think that can help heal is the success of our country. We are really successful now. We've gone up \$11.7 trillion in -- in worth.

If you know, China has come down tremendously. Tremendously. China would have superseded us in two years as an economic power; now, they're not even close.

China got rid of their "China '25" because I found it very insulting. I said that to them. I said, "China '25" is very insulting, because "China '25" means, in 2025, they're going to take over, economically, the world. I said, "That's not happening."

And we've gone way up. They've gone down. And I don't want them to go down. We'll have a good meeting and we're going to see what we can do.

But I have to say this: Billions of dollars will soon be pouring into our Treasury from taxes that China is paying for us. And if you speak to Mr. Pillsbury, who probably is the leading authority on China -- he was on the other day saying he has never seen anything like it. And you know who else hasn't? China hasn't.

Q And Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: But we're going to try and make a deal with China because I want to have great relationships with President Xi, as I do, and also with China.

Q -- you're talking about the economic --

THE PRESIDENT: Okay.

Q How do you see your role --

THE PRESIDENT: All right.

Q -- as a moral leader?

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead, please.

Q Mr. President, just how do you see --

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead, please. Please, please.

Q -- your role as a moral leader?

THE PRESIDENT: Please, please. Go ahead. There's so many people, I'm sorry. Go ahead.

Q As a moral leader, though?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I am a great moral leader, and I love our country.

Go ahead, please.

Q Thank you, sir. You said earlier in this press conference that Democrats had a choice; that you would not work with them on legislation if they were investigating you. Do you not have a choice in the matter as well? Don't you have a responsibility --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think it's inappropriate -- no, no. I think it's very inappropriate.

We should get along and get deals done. Now, we can investigate. They look at us. We look at them. It goes on for two years. Then, at the end of two years, nothing is done.

Now, what's bad for them is, being in the majority, I'm just going to blame them. You understand. I'm going to blame them. They're the majority.

Honestly, it makes it much simpler for me. I -- they will be blamed. But I think Nancy Pelosi -- and, you know, I put that statement out on social media today about Nancy Pelosi that, if she's short of votes -- because frankly, I think she deserves -- and a lot of people thought I was being sarcastic or I was kidding. I wasn't.

I think she deserves it. She's been fighting long for it. She's been fighting -- I really mean this. This was -- there was nothing sarcastic about it or -- it was really meant in -- with very good intentions. I think she deserves it. She's fought long and hard. She's a very capable person. And, you know, you have other people shooting at her, trying to take over the Speakership.

And I said, if -- if it's appropriate -- I said, if we can and if we will, if she has a problem, I think I would be able to very easily supply her the necessary votes.

That's not said in any way other than I really believe she deserves that position. I also believe that Nancy Pelosi and I can work together and get a lot of things done, along with Mitch and everybody else that we have to work with. I think we'll get a lot done.

Q Mr. President, why can't you --

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, go ahead.

Q Mr. President, why can't you --

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead.

Q Mr. President, why can't you do that while subpoenas are coming through?

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me?

Q Why can't you work together while there are subpoenas or while there are investigations in process?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we will. Look, now that the election is over -- the election is over. Now everybody is in love. But then I see the hostility of questions in the room. I come in here as a nice person wanting to answer questions and I have people jumping out of their -- their seats, screaming questions at me.

No, the election is over. And I'm, you know, very -- I am extraordinarily happy. I really am. And, by the way, I'd tell you if I wasn't.

Look at what happened in Florida. Look at what happened in Georgia. Look at what happened in so many locations with governorships. Nobody talks about the governorships. Look at the amount of work that was given to these other candidates against my candidate.

And, I mean, I'm extraordinarily happy. And if I wasn't, I'd let you know. There's nothing wrong. I mean, look, you look at midterms and you look at elections -- elections generally, you see it's very rare that a party who has the presidency does well. We did unbelievably well. To win Florida, both the Senate and the governorship against two very talented people.

I'll tell you what: We did incredibly. To win Georgia, where you had some of the biggest stars campaigning endlessly, including President Obama. You know, I'll tell you what: This was a great victory for us. And again, from a dealmaking

standpoint, we are all much better off the way it turned out. Because I really believe, if the Democrats want to, we can do a tremendous amount of great legislation.

Yes, please. Go ahead.

Should we keep this going for a little while?

Q Yes!

Q Yes, I think you should keep this going.

THE PRESIDENT: When you get bored, would you please tell me? Seriously, tell me. I don't want to --

Q We're never bored.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, no. Hopefully not. I don't want to overstay. But, yes, please. Go ahead.

Q Hi, Mr. President. Yamiche Alcindor with PBS NewsHour. On the campaign trail, you called yourself a nationalist. Some people saw that as emboldening white nationalists. Now people are also saying --

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know why you'd say that. That's such a racist question.

Q There are some people that say that now the Republican Party is seen as supporting white nationalists because of your rhetoric. What do you make of that?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I don't believe that. I don't believe that.

I don't believe -- well, I don't know. Why do I have my highest poll numbers ever with African Americans? Why do I have among the highest poll numbers with African Americans? I mean, why do I have my highest poll numbers? That's such a racist question.

Honestly, I mean, I know you have it written down, and you're going to tell me. Let me tell you: It's a racist question.

Q And Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: I love -- and you know what the word is? I love our country. I do. You call -- you have nationalists. You have globalists. I also love the world and I don't mind helping the world, but we have to straighten out our country first. We have a lot of problems.

Q And --

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me. But to say that -- what you said is so insulting to me. It's a very terrible thing that you said.

Q And Mr. President -- Mr. President, people have --

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Please, go ahead. Go ahead.

Q You've talked about --

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me.

Q You talked about middle-class tax cuts on the campaign trail. How will you get Democrats to support that policy?

THE PRESIDENT: You have to ask them.

Q Well, what's your plan for working with Democrats --

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me.

Q -- on the middle-class tax plan?

THE PRESIDENT: You know what my plan is? You know what my plan is? I'll ask them. And if they say yes, I'm all for it. And if they say no, there's nothing you can do because you need their votes.

Go ahead.

Q Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. Francesca Chambers, DailyMail.com. You said many times on the campaign trail that you didn't want Nancy Pelosi to be Speaker. At least you suggested that. You spent a lot of time talking about her and Chuck Schumer.

THE PRESIDENT: It's not a question of want. I would've -- so, let me answer it a little -- would I have preferred winning by two or three or four? I would almost have to think about that. But certainly, I like to win. And if I win, she's not going to be Speaker.

Q What did she say to you though, yesterday, that made you give her your support?

THE PRESIDENT: Honestly, we had a very warm conversation. You know, she loves this country. And she's a very smart woman. She's done a very good job. She was really -- I mean, she's had a very -- she's had a very --

Q Did she promise that they wouldn't seek to impeach you?

THE PRESIDENT: She's had a very, very -- we didn't talk about impeaching. We didn't talk about -- what do you do? Do you impeach somebody because he created the greatest economic success in the history of our country? "Let's impeach him because the country is so successful. Let's impeach him." "Has he done anything wrong?" They asked somebody, "Has he done anything wrong?" "No, but let's impeach him anyway."

And they also said, "Let's impeach Justice Kavanaugh. Let's impeach him." And now they have the second woman coming out that -- the first or second. And I hate to say this, but it was public.

"And, after him, we're going to impeach the Vice President. We're going to impeach Mike Pence." Mike Pence doesn't get impeached for anything. "So let's impeach the President, and then we'll impeach the Vice President."

These people are sick. And you know what? They have to get their bearing. Really, they have to get their bearing. And when you ask about division, they're the ones that caused the division. They caused tremendous division.

Q Okay. Regarding all the retirements in the House -- regarding all the retirements in the House, Mr. President -- really quickly -- you suggested that --

THE PRESIDENT: Who is retiring?

Q You said that many of the retirements that happened in the House made it very difficult for --

THE PRESIDENT: Many retirements, yeah.

Q -- that made it very difficult for you in this election cycle, and that it was because they were chairmans, there were chairmanships that were vacated. But Jeff Flake wasn't a chairman of a committee, and Paul Ryan also retired this cycle. So why do you think that is? Whose fault is it that there were so many retirements?

THE PRESIDENT: In Jeff Flake's case, it's me. Pure and simple. I retired him. I'm very proud of it. I did the country a great service.

Go ahead. Give him a -- (laughter). Give him a -- he is retired. I'd like to call it another word, but we're going to treat him with great respect.

Go ahead.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Jeff Flake. That's another beauty.

Go ahead.

Q Two questions, please.

THE PRESIDENT: No, one. One. One. One. Too many people. Sorry.

Q Well, all right. It's all right. You seem to enjoy this venue very much. Are you going to make the standard press conference a staple of the remaining two years?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No.

Q Or will you have more briefings with Sarah Sanders?

THE PRESIDENT: No. You know, when I don't do the -- I think Sarah is fantastic. Where is Sarah? Where is Sarah? Sarah is so great. I think, Sarah, you've represented me so well and been abused. She's been horribly treated by a lot of people.

Q So she's going to stay on as Press Secretary?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. It's very interesting because Sarah was telling -- we were talking about it the other day.

So I had a period where I figured, you know what I'll do? I won't do any real interviews. And then they start saying, "Why doesn't he do -- why?" And they're all coming up with all kinds --

Then over the last couple of months I decided, I'll do a lot -- we'll stop at the helicopter, we'll do this, we'll do a lot of -- and then they say, "Why is he doing so many press conferences? What's wrong? What?"

So when I don't do them, you say, "What's wrong?" When I do do them, you say, "What's wrong?" And when I go in the middle, you say, "What's wrong?" But in the media -- you know that, Jon. Right?

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible) complained about access.

THE PRESIDENT: You're sort of right.

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible) complained about access.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, good.

Q (Off-mic.) (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. You did. Excuse me. Well, you complained about access when I purposely just stayed away from the press for a while because I wanted to see how it worked. And can I be honest with you? It didn't work well.

Q Mr. President, I did (inaudible) question. So Sarah will stay on as Press Secretary?

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, please. Go ahead. No. Go ahead.

Q Mr. President, first off, I personally think it's very good to have you here because a free press and this type of engagement --

THE PRESIDENT: I do, too. Actually? I do, too.

Q Yes. It's vital to democracy.

THE PRESIDENT: It's called "earned media." It's worth billions. Go ahead.

Q Um, so I have two questions for you, if that's all right? It's a rare opportunity. Um, first, just a point of clarification on the tax returns issue. You brought up the audit. That doesn't prevent you from releasing them.

THE PRESIDENT: I know. Sure. But I didn't say it prevented me, I said lawyers will tell you not to do it. Go ahead. What's your next question? Go ahead.

Q If, well, just on that --

THE PRESIDENT: Come on. Let's go. More exciting question than that, please.

Q Okay. The second one: Michael Cohen recently said you called black voters "stupid."

THE PRESIDENT: That's false.

Q Omarosa has accused you of using the N-word.

THE PRESIDENT: That's false.

Q And the rapper, Lil Jon, has said you called him "Uncle Tom." What's your response?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know who Lil Jon is. I don't -- I really don't.

Q He was on "The Apprentice."

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. Oh, he was? Okay. Oh, I see. I don't know.

Q Have you ever made racist remarks?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No, I would never do that and I don't use racist remarks. And you know what? If I did, you people would've known about it. I've been hearing there are tapes. For years and years, "There are tapes."

Number one, I never worried about it because I never did. I never used racist remarks. I have never used racist remarks.

Okay.

Q Well, one point of fact.

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead.

Q You have been a -- one point of fact, because you told her you have the highest approval --

THE PRESIDENT: Quiet. Quiet.

Q -- amongst African Americans.

THE PRESIDENT: Quiet. Quiet.

Go ahead.

Q It's just 8 percent, sir. Single digits.

THE PRESIDENT: See, when you talk about division, it's people like this that cause division. Great division.

Q Point of fact, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Great -- no. No, point of fact is that I never used a racist remark. That's the point of fact.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Where -- who are you from?

Q I'm from Yahoo! News. (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Yahoo! -- oh, Yahoo! -- oh, good. Good, I hope they're doing well.

Q MTV Lebanon (inaudible). Sir, first question --

THE PRESIDENT: Where are you from?

Q MTV Lebanon. Lebanon.

THE PRESIDENT: Lebanon. Good.

Q Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. We're so happy to be -- as well have this opportunity. Mr. -- President Erdogan said he's not going to follow your sanctions and he's going to keep buying oil from --

THE PRESIDENT: Who said that?

Q President Erdogan. Turkey.

THE PRESIDENT: I know. I know.

Q And you're going to meet him soon --

THE PRESIDENT: I just can't understand his speak --

Q Okay. You're going to meet him soon. You're going to have this talk and some countries are going to take the same steps that President Erdogan is doing and --

THE PRESIDENT: So let me just say about the oil, okay? So we're -- we imposed, just recently, the strongest sanctions in the history of our country, just about. Although I guess North Korea is there, too. But I gave some countries a break on the oil. I did it a little bit because they really asked for some help. But I really did it because I don't want to drive oil prices up to \$100 a barrel or \$150 a barrel, because I'm driving them down.

If you look at oil prices, they've come down very substantially over the last couple of months. That's because of me. Because you have a monopoly called "OPEC." And I don't like -- wait.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: And I don't like that monopoly. I don't like it. And oil prices are coming down.

So rather than deciding to be as tough as I am on most of the sanctions, what I've done is I said, "We're not going to do it that way; we're going to let some of the oil go out to these countries that really do need it because I don't want to drive the oil prices up to \$100 or \$150 a barrel, which could happen very easily. It's a very fragile market. Very, very fragile. I know it very well. And it's the absolute right decision.

And they'll get tougher as time goes by, maybe, but I don't want to have any effect on the oil prices worldwide, where I drive them up. Because I consider that to be a tax, and I don't like taxes.

Go ahead.

Q What happened with the peace process between Israel and Palestine?

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead. Please. Please.

Q The peace process is over?

THE PRESIDENT: Who?

Q It just came out that Jon Tester won --

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, congratulations to Jon Tester. Congratulations. I'm sure you're very unhappy about that.

Go ahead.

Q Mr. President, can --

MS. SANDERS: (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Please, go ahead.

Q Can you address the --

THE PRESIDENT: We'll take a couple of more, and then we'll go.

Q Can you address concerns in places like Georgia where people waited in line to vote for hours, where voting machines weren't working in certain districts, and there hasn't --

THE PRESIDENT: Do you think that's the reason that the candidate lost?

Q Well, there are concerns being raised that it wasn't --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I mean, look, I wasn't involved in Georgia. I wasn't.

Q I know, but are -- but, as President --

THE PRESIDENT: Other than I love the state. I do love the state.

Q Yes, but as President of the United States, are you concerned about the access that people are having to voting?

THE PRESIDENT: I heard it was very efficient in Georgia. I heard it was very efficient. But again, you'd have to ask the state governments because -- just one of those things you're going to have to ask them.

Yeah, go ahead. Please. Please, go ahead.

Q Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President. You expressed some concerns about social media companies unfairly censoring conservatives during the election. Do you anticipate working with Democrats to regulate these companies, or are you satisfied with the way things are?

THE PRESIDENT: I would -- I would do that. Yeah. I would look at that very seriously. I think it's a serious problem. At the same time, you start getting into speech; that's a very dangerous problem. That could be the beginning. So it's very dangerous.

Believe it or not, I'm one that really likes free speech. A lot of people don't understand that. But I am a big believer. And when you start regulating, a lot of bad things can happen.

But I would certainly talk to the Democrats if they want to do that. And I think they do want to do that.

Yes, sir. Go ahead.

Q Former President -- former President Barack Obama famously said that he had "a pen and a phone" to use executive power on issues like immigration. Do you see yourself using executive power to get some of your immigration agenda done?

THE PRESIDENT: I do. I do. I think that some of it I can use executive power -- on some. Not all. But I got -- I mean, he certainly used it.

He used it on DACA. And when he did it, he said something to the effect that "I'm not allowed to do this, it will never hold up, but I'm doing it anyway." And he did it and they found judges that approved it. We also found judges that didn't approve it, so it's obviously going to be determined in the Supreme Court.

And if the Supreme -- if the court rules in favor of what President Obama thinks they should rule -- which is what he said -- then I will probably have a deal with the Democrats in a very short period of time. We were very close to having a deal until we got that very strange ruling.

Q Thank you, sir. You also made some promises about immigration during the campaign, and I want to know if you're going to follow through with them. Are you going to be aggressive --

THE PRESIDENT: Which one are you talking about?

Q Birthright citizenship. Are you going to sign an executive order to ban --

THE PRESIDENT: We are looking at it very seriously. Absolutely.

Q I mean, is it yes or no? Or are you --

THE PRESIDENT: And I believe we have the absolute right. But that's another case that will be determined by the Supreme Court of the United States.

Q Are you going to send 15,000 troops to the border?

THE PRESIDENT: You've been reading the same documents as I have; you know exactly what I'm doing. You know exactly what I'm doing.

So go ahead. What's your next question?

Q Also, on the Khashoggi matter, it's been more than a month since the death of Mr. Khashoggi, the journalist.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. Very sad thing. Very terrible thing.

Q Do you think Saudi Arabia is guilty of having him murdered? And if so, what kind of punishment would be involved?

THE PRESIDENT: I'll have a much stronger opinion on that subject over the next week, and I'm working very closely with Congress. We're working together. Some very talented people. And we're working with Congress, we're working with Turkey, and we're working with Saudi Arabia. And I'm forming a very strong opinion.

Go ahead, Jon. Go ahead, Jon.

Q Mr. President, just a quick follow up. You said something about Nancy Pelosi. You said that Nancy Pelosi, she loves our country. Do you regret some of the things you said during the campaign?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q I mean, at various times, you said Democrats --

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q -- want to put a "wrecking ball...to our future"; they want to "destroy our country."

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I believe that. I believe that. With their current policy, they are using a wrecking ball on our country. I believe that 100 percent. This would be a wrecking ball.

But I think there's a compromise somewhere, and I think that could be really good for our country.

Okay, how about one more?

Q Do you regret the ad? Do you regret the ad that you did that was branded as racist ad and even Fox News wouldn't air it?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't. No. No. No.

Q NBC wouldn't air it, and other networks.

THE PRESIDENT: Do I regret it?

Q Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: Surprised you would ask me that question. I do not.

Go ahead, please.

Q Thank you, sir. And I think we'd all love to have more of these, if you're willing.

In 2017, shortly after you took office, your Homeland Security Department shuttered a program to counter homegrown, right-wing extremism, white supremacy, and related terrorist groups -- domestic terrorist groups; and redirected that funding towards fighting Islamic terrorism. Do you believe that white supremacists, terrorists, right-wing terrorists, these homegrown terrorists on that side of the spectrum are a problem, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, I do. I do believe that's a problem.

Q And what is your administration going to do about it?

THE PRESIDENT: I believe all hate is a problem, but I do believe that is a problem.

Q What are you going to do about it, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: And it's a problem we want to solve.

Q How, sir? What are you going to do about it, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, go ahead.

Q Sir -- sir, what are you going to do about it? You cut off the funding.

Q Mr. President, you've said --

THE PRESIDENT: No, we have given funding for that -- a lot of funding. But I do believe it's a problem. And can I tell you what -- it's a problem that I don't like even a little bit.

Go ahead.

Q Aixa Diaz with Hearst Television. You've said, "Pretend I'm on the ballot" -- yesterday. You called it a referendum on your presidency. Many local districts across the country rejected your midterm message, particularly suburban women. How do you bridge that divide now -- also with the influx of women coming into Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: I think my message was very well received. I mean, just look at the results. Midterm elections are disasters for sitting Presidents and administrations. This has been a very successful -- and, look, you can write it any way

you want. And if you disagree with me -- this has been incredibly success -- when you look at the races. How about Ohio? I didn't even mention. I mentioned Florida; I mentioned Georgia. How about the governor of Ohio? A fantastic --

Q But what's your message to suburban women voters?

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me. Excuse me. Excuse me. A fantastic man, who was down on the polls. And everybody was talking about this person that was so great. And I went up there, and I did a rally, and they have now a great governor -- you're going to have a great governor in Ohio for, hopefully, a long period of time. But for four years. And -- Mike DeWine is a fantastic person.

And I went up there for two reasons: Because I felt that his opposition was not a good person -- and we know a lot about him -- and I felt that Mike was a fantastic person. And he won. And not only did he win, he won easily.

So add that to Florida, and add that to Georgia, and add that to all of the other races that we won -- outside, even, of the Senate races, which were the biggest of all. Because these were races that -- and Mike Pence can tell you, and some of the folks over here can tell you -- these were races that were going to be unopposed. We were not going to oppose certain of the people running -- certain senators. They said they couldn't be beaten. They said Heidi could not be beaten. "Please, don't do it." This was a year out.

Q What about in the suburban districts? How do you get those back?

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me. You -- no, but you're telling me about -- you're telling me about popularity. They said many of these people -- when I said 9 out of 11 -- but I said -- when many of these people -- these weren't like easy races; they were tough races.

And so I think the level of popularity -- the first question I was asked was about, "Well, what have you learned? What about your own popularity?" I think that's what I learned, is -- I was very well received by this great country, by the people of our great country. And I'm very proud of that, because I love the people of this country. These people -- we are the greatest people. I love the people of our country.

Q So what do you say to women, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: And I'll tell you something: When you look at the races that we won in Florida, which we weren't expected to win; and Georgia, which we weren't expected to win; and Ohio, which we weren't expected to win -- and won; I mean, you look at some of them -- the number of votes that we got is incredible.

So I'm really happy with not only the way it came out, but the response to me as your President. And as your President, I made our country safe. I've rebuilt and am in the process of rebuilding our military. And the jobs are here. Every one of them built here. We're going to have the strongest -- very shortly, we're going to have the strongest military our country has ever had.

I've done more for the vets than any President has done, certainly in many, many decades, with Choice and with other things, as you know. With other things.

But our vets are doing better than they've ever done. But if you look at Choice -- Choice alone -- I mean, just take a look at what we've done with Choice. But the people of our country are very happy with the job that I'm doing. And you know, one of the things --

Q But looking ahead to 2020 --

THE PRESIDENT: One of the things -- one of the things that they want so much is security. They want security, both at the border -- they want it with our military; they want it with law enforcement; they want it with ICE.

You know, we've taken out thousands of MS-13 gang members -- thousands out of our -- hard to believe -- thousands -- out of our country. Women of our country, who are incredible people, they want security; they want safety. They want financial security also. We've done that. But they want physical security.

And we've taken out thousands of people that shouldn't be in this country. But we have to get strong immigration laws so they don't come in. We want laws where they don't come in, where we don't have to take them out, per se.

And again, I'm very honored to be with all of you. It was a great day yesterday. It was a great evening. I think we had a tremendous success. And hopefully the tone can get better. Hopefully --

Q How will you change that?

THE PRESIDENT: Hopefully the tone can get a lot better. And I really believe it begins with the media. I really -- we used to call it the "press." But I really --

Q Does it begin with you, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: But I really believe it begins with the media. If you would cover -- and there was a very interesting story written in a very good paper recently that talked about the fact that it isn't good what the media is doing, and that I do have the right to fight back because I'm treated very unfairly.

So I do fight back. And I'm fighting back not for me; I'm fighting back for the people of this country.

Thank you all very much. Thank you.

END 1:24 P.M. EST

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[The White House]
Office of the Press Secretary
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 23, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
IN THANKSGIVING TELECONFERENCE WITH MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY

Via Teleconference
Mar-a-Lago Club and Resort | Palm Beach, Florida

November 22, 2018

9:42 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, well thank you all very much. And I say to our great, great warriors, "Hello, and Happy Thanksgiving." We're celebrating Thanksgiving over in the United States, as you know, and you're celebrating it wherever you are in all parts of the world. And we'll be talking to you individually.

We're honored to be joined on today's call by great patriots -- you are really great patriots -- representing each branch of the American armed services.

Melania and I want to express our profound gratitude for the extraordinary sacrifices you make to defend our nation. While you are away from your families and loved ones, I hope that you'll take solace in knowing that all of the American families that you hold so close to your heart are all doing well.

The nation is doing well economically, better than anybody in the world. We're the hot nation of the world and it's nice to know you're fighting, and you're fighting for something that's doing well, and that's our country.

I want to begin by welcoming Colonel Stephanie Barton and the men and women of the 101st Airborne Division. These are real warriors. And you have the Resolute Support Sustainment Brigade and they are joining us from Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan, where our soldiers are providing invaluable aid in combined joint area operations throughout Afghanistan.

You are doing an incredible job. A lot of progress has been made and your courage truly inspires us all. We know what you're doing. We watch it. And oftentimes we're watching it every night during the news. And we know it's dangerous and we also know that you've had an unbelievable impact.

Joining us from al-Jaber Air Base in Kuwait is the Central Command -- response and Crisis Response Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force. Lieutenant Colonel Sam Howie, you are really great Marines and you're the embodiment of honor, and courage, and commitment.

It's incredible, the job you're doing. I particularly want to congratulate you on the work you've done to crush ISIS from the air and from the ground. And really it's -- big, big progress has been made. They're very close to being gone and we like it that way. But you have shown incredible courage. And I have to say, you've shown great, great leadership. So, thank you very much. And, Lieutenant Colonel, thank you very much and we'll be talking to you in a little while.

Happy Thanksgiving as well to Captain Pat Hannifin and all of the sailors aboard the USS Ronald Reagan. Great ship. Your ship's motto is one that we embrace every day: Peace Through Strength. That's what the motto is, and we have that motto at home. Everywhere the Seventh Fleet sails, the USS Ronald Reagan is an enduring symbol of American might, American strength, American power and, really, American goodness, in so many ways.

From the United States Air Force, we're joined by the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing, which is supporting Operation Freedom's Sentinel and NATO's Resolute Support.

Brigadier General David Lyons -- thank you very much, David -- is the Commander. And I want to congratulate you and every minute [member] of the 455th for your outstanding work. Not only have you destroyed hundreds of ISIS -- and actually far more than hundreds -- and many, many Taliban targets, but you protect coalition ground forces throughout the region. And you protect them like nobody else. It's incredible the job you do. And I just want to thank you all for being on. And I have to say, General, it's great to speak to you by teleconference and by phone because your reputation is an incredible one.

Representing the U.S. Coast Guard are crewmembers from six Coast Guard cutters and from the shore support teams that are part of Patrol Forces Southwest Asia, which is the largest Coast Guard unit outside of the United States. And I'm actually going right now -- I'm in Palm Beach, Florida, and I'm going over to your local Coast Guard station and we're going to spend some great time with the men and women of the Coast Guard.

They have, from a lot of standpoints, you could call it branding, you could call it whatever you want, the job they've done on hurricanes in this country. They've saved thousands and thousands of people. In fact, in Texas, they saved over 12,000 people. If you think of what that means, over 12,000 people. They went into seas and they went into areas that nobody else would go into. And it was incredible. What they've done in Texas, what they did in Florida, what they did in Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard has really become a symbol of strength and perseverance and toughness and genius, actually. It's purely genius.

So, hello to Lieutenant Nicholas Hartmann who is the Commanding Officer of the cutter Aquidneck. And I also want to congratulate Seaman Christopher Wilson on being selected for "A" school. That's "A," like in "A." That's the best, right? Seaman Wilson, you truly make us proud. Congratulations. That's a big deal. Going to that school is like going to the Wharton School of Finance, if you happen to be doing what you do.

And to everyone on today's videoconference also, I want to thank you all for serving. Today we thank God for the blessings of having you people be our heroes, and you really are our heroes. And your families are back here and they love you, and they respect you and they look forward to seeing you because you're the ones who keep America safe and strong and free. You do a job like nobody else. And it is really great respect that we all have. You are very much appreciated, like you wouldn't believe, by the American public, by the citizens of our country.

I want to maybe start with the Air Force. And I know that Brigadier General David Lyons is on the phone. And, David, tell me a little bit about what you're doing.

BRIGADIER GENERAL LYONS: Our mission here, we defend the two busiest airfields in Afghanistan: Kandahar and Bagram. We support our teammates and our mission set, and then we deliver decisive combat air power across the entire country of Afghanistan.

Mr. President, I know you can't see us right now, but you've got 150 airmen in this room that would love to say Happy Thanksgiving to you. (Inaudible), what do you say to the President?

PARTICIPANTS: Happy Thanksgiving!

THE PRESIDENT: That's great. Well, that's really fantastic. How are things going over there? Are they -- are you looking up? How is looking to you? You've seen it. You've been there a while and you've seen what's going on. You know what's happening better than anybody. How do you find things going?

BRIGADIER GENERAL LYONS: Well, both the Taliban and ISIS are resilient adversaries, but I think that we're doing well. We get after them every single day. Our objective here is to fight the away game. And so what I mean by that is we never want this adversary to reach our shores again. And so every airman here is dedicated to keeping this fight away from our shores. A stable Afghanistan is good for Afghanistan, but we do what we do for America, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, said it better than anybody could have said: "Keep them away from our shores." And that's why we're doing the strong border. As you probably see over the news what's happening in our southern border and our southern border territory. Large numbers of people, and in many cases, we have no idea who they are. And in many cases, they're not good people; they're bad people. But large numbers of people are forming at our border, and I don't have to even ask you; I know what you want to do. You want to make sure that you know who we're letting in. And we're not letting in anybody essentially because we want to be very, very careful. So, you're right. You're doing it over there, we're doing it over here.

And your people at the border, we have the military at the border for the first time. I don't know if it's ever -- or certainly there's never been a presence like this, but we have a very powerful border now. We have the concertina fencing and we have things that people don't even believe. We took old, broken wall and we wrapped it with barbed wire-plus. I guess you could really call it "barbed wire-plus." This is the ultimate. And nobody is getting through these walls. And we're going to make sure they're the right people because that's what you and your family want and all of your families, that's what they want. And that's why we're all fighting. You know, we're fighting for borders. We're fighting for our country. If we don't have borders, we don't have a country.

So we're doing very well on the southern border. We're very tough. We get a lot of bad court decisions from the Ninth Circuit, which has become a big thorn in our side. We always lose and then you lose again and again, and then you hopefully win at the Supreme Court, which we've done. But it's a terrible thing when judges take over your protective services; when they tell you how to protect your border. It's a disgrace.

So, we're winning and you're winning. And I appreciate it very much. And, General, your reputation is an incredible one. Thank you very much for doing the job, and I'll see you back when you're in the United States. Or maybe I'll even see you over there. You never know what's going to happen.

BRIGADIER GENERAL LYONS: Thank you, Mr. President. We appreciate that.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Really great. And thank all the men and women with you. Really spectacular people.

Well, next, let's talk to the U.S. Coast Guard Commanding Officer of Coast Guard cutter Aquidneck. And it would be Lieutenant Nick Hartmann. And so, Nick, tell me a little bit about what you're doing, where you are, and how's it going.

LIEUTENANT HARTMANN: Good morning, Mr. President. This is Nicholas Hartmann, like you mentioned, from Coast Guard cutter Aquidneck. Here in the room we have 14 members from Patrol Forces Southwest Asia. And we're located in the Kingdom of Bahrain, Mr. President. Our mission out here is to patrol the Arabian Gulf Straits of Hormuz and conduct our U.S. Central Command and NAVCENT objectives here in the Gulf.

A lot of our work is partnering and building relationships with the Gulf Coast countries, and so that we have a good standing and resolve here in the Arabian Gulf and in Central Command AOR.

Things, in my opinion, Mr. President, are going very well for us.

THE PRESIDENT: And what do you see in the region? What's going on in the region? How are they feeling about things? How are they feeling about trade? Because, you know, trade for me is a very big subject all over. We've been taken advantage of for many, many years by bad trade deals. We don't have any good trade deals. How are you finding things in the region, Nick?

LIEUTENANT HARTMANN: Mr. President, from our perspective out on the water, sir, we're seeing that there is an abundance of trade happening in the region. There are vessels moving through the Straits of Hormuz and across the Arabian Gulf on a daily basis carrying cargo to and fro. And we don't see any issues in terms of trade right now, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Well, you'll keep it that way. And you know, we want to have good, free trade. And we also want to have fair deals where we can do well too. Not just everybody else. Right now, every nation in the world does well with us; we don't do well with them. So that's changing and it's changing fast. And where you are is a big factor in that, as you know. You've been told and you've been briefed.

Well, I want to thank you very much, Nick. And great job. And again, as I said, there's no brand that's gone up like the Coast Guard over the last couple of years because of what you've done with the hurricanes in this country. People saw things that they've never seen before. The bravery of those -- of your people going out in waves like -- like, you know, record setting. It's been record setting.

The one hurricane in Texas, they say, dumped more water and it was more violent in terms of water than anything we've ever had in the country. And you guys went out there and you did it like just a day in the office. And I really appreciate it. We all really appreciate it, Nick. And thank you very much. Thank you very much.

LIEUTENANT HARTMANN: Thank you, Mr. President. And Happy Thanksgiving.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. You take care of yourself.

Let's go to the Army. Good old Army. We love the Army. We have Colonel Stephanie Barton of the U.S. Army. And, Stephanie, tell us a little bit about yourself and where you are, and what you're focused on and what you're doing.

COLONEL BARTON: First and foremost, good morning and Happy Thanksgiving on behalf of the 101st Sustainment Brigade. We're currently located in Bagram, Afghanistan.

Sir, what we do for the country of Afghanistan, we're the senior logistics headquarters in theater. And it is an away game -- and I will tell you, in order to fight and win the nation's wars, it's because of sustainment and logistics. And you've got highly motivated, true professionals in this room and outside this room that are truly making it happen.

We support -- if it's in the hands of the warfighter, it comes through us, to them. So we support everything from coalition to joint forces, from border to border here in the country, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Good and how are you finding things in Afghanistan right now?

COLONEL BARTON: Sir, it's good. We're truly making the mission happen when it comes to sustainment. We're response for all the strategic, operational, and tactical logistics.

Like I said, if it comes in the theater, we get it in the warfighters' hand. But we have a phenomenal team and I can't speak enough about that. Because a lot of the times, it's the sustainment (inaudible) we're behind the scenes, which is fine. But it's a good team effort and it takes the support by all to make it happen.

THE PRESIDENT: So, Colonel, how many people are you commanding right now, would you say?

COLONEL BARTON: Sir, 10,000.

THE PRESIDENT: Wow. That's a lot of people. That's fantastic, Stephanie. That's beautiful. That's beautiful. And not only is it important what you're doing, but you're enjoying what you're doing. Is that right?

COLONEL BARTON: Sir, absolutely. We truly love it. And I will tell you, our formation is a great mix, sir. We have all the Army COMPOs from the active duty, National Guard, Reserve. We have Army DOD civilians and civilian contractors that -- really, we all come together and make this mission happen.

So, we do hate that we're not with our family and friends today, but I'll tell you, we are a close family here and I'm truly happy to be a part of it. It takes the whole community, from (inaudible) theaters to civilians, to make it happen. And, sir, you would be very proud, because we truly are.

THE PRESIDENT: That's fantastic. We're proud of you. And I'll tell you what, we're proud of your people. And please say hello to everybody. Have an incredible Thanksgiving and know we're taking good care of you. You know, the budget is now at \$716 billion, Stephanie. Right? So, we're getting rid of some of that old equipment that you -- you see what's going in. The best in the world, right?

So, you see a big difference. It's an awfully big difference from what we had before. And it's only getting better. We'll be stronger than ever before. And with people like you, we feel very confident.

So, Stephanie, thank you very much. Happy Thanksgiving to all. And I will see you when you're back.

COLONEL BARTON: Sir, sounds great. We have one last message if that's okay?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Yes.

COLONEL BARTON: One, two, three --

PARTICIPANTS: Go Army!

THE PRESIDENT: That's great. I really appreciate that. I really do. I appreciate it. And take care of yourself. We'll see you all soon. Thank you.

From the U.S. Marine Corps, we have Colonel George Schreffler. And, George, are you on?

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWIE: Sir, this is Lieutenant Colonel Sam Howie. Colonel Schreffler is doing a battlefield circulation right now.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWIE: I'm the executive officer, and I'm here with several Marines who would like to wish you and our fellow Americans a Happy Thanksgiving. (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: That's great. That's great, Sam. Good. How's it going over there?

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWIE: It's going great, sir. Right now, with the Special Purpose MAGTF. We're based in Kuwait. But we have Marines from Jordan all the way up to Afghanistan, and up into Iraq and Syria.

And, every day, those Marines are ensuring that those who do us harm, pays for it. It's pretty amazing watching you -- what you've done with men and women tells the Marines and what they do -- puts a smile on their face every day.

THE PRESIDENT: And how is the progress coming, would you say?

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWIE: I would say the progress is excellent, sir. We've moved throughout those areas and cleared the vast majority of those enemy forces who face us. And right now, I think we're in a good position to continue to (inaudible) the rest of the year or foreseeable future.

THE PRESIDENT: That's great. That's great. I'm hearing very good things. And they treat you good over there I imagine? Right? Do they treat you good?

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWIE: Sir, outstanding. Our partners throughout, including here at al-Jaber Air Base. For the Air Force, they treat us like gold. We want for nothing and today we had a -- I think everyone can agree, a fantastic Thanksgiving dinner here aboard the base.

THE PRESIDENT: That's great. That's great. Well, they should. We're good friends and they've been a good ally. We treat them well and they treat us well. And a lot of good things are happening over there. People are surprised to see how fast things are turning around. But you have one of the great bases. You have something that's incredible and special. And we'll get to see you very soon.

And I will say -- and say hello to everybody else -- but I will say, I want you to have a great Thanksgiving. You are -- what's the time difference? What -- what is your time lag over there? How many hours between, let's say, East Coast?

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWIE: Right now, sir, it's 18:00 in the evening. So it's about an eight-hour difference between us.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. That's a pretty big time difference, right? That's a pretty big time difference. So you've celebrated.

Well, listen, you just take care of yourself and say hello to the Colonel and everybody. And you're special people -- very, very special people -- and we're very proud of you. And give my regards to Kuwait and everybody.

But a lot of progress being made. Your country is really doing well. It's really doing well, like it hasn't done before. So that's good. It's always good to be fighting for something that is working. And unlike a lot of countries, this one works well and it's working better than ever.

So, we'll see you when you're back or maybe we'll see you some other place. Okay?

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWIE: (Inaudible.) Semper Fidelis.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you very much. Thank you. Take care of yourself.

From the U.S. Navy, we have the Commanding Officer, Captain Pat Hannifin. And, Pat, are you on the phone?

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Yes, sir. I'm with you. And from the over 4,800 sailors and airmen aboard USS Ronald Reagan, the nation's only permanently forward-deployed aircraft carrier.

We are currently in Victoria Harbour, Hong Kong, about 13 hours ahead of you. It's still Thanksgiving here. And from all the sailors aboard Reagan, serving peace through strength for America in the Indo-Pacific, we wish you a Happy Thanksgiving.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that's great, Pat. I appreciate it very much. And say hello to everybody, and Happy Thanksgiving to you.

So, the condition of the ship is A1?

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Alpha-1, sir. Absolutely.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, good. Very important. So, you know, we have another big one. The Gerald Ford is going to be joining you pretty soon. How does this compare in size and scope with the Gerald Ford? You know all about that. That's the new one, right?

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Yes, sir. Size and scope. A good friend of mine just left command to that. But size and scope about the same. Certainly some improvements there to the plants and few of the -- and the radars and even the catapults and gear are slightly different as well.

THE PRESIDENT: So tell -- hey, Pat --

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: But we'll push (inaudible) daily.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. Pat, tell me about the catapult system. So on the Gerald Ford they don't use steam, which is the first one that I've ever heard of that doesn't use steam. And I know they have some difficulties, which I'm not happy about. And they spent a lot of money. And I was just curious.

The steam system is tried and true for many, many years, as long as we've had aircraft carriers. How do you find steam versus what they're doing on the Gerald Ford, which is electronic and digital, if you can believe it?

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Yes, sir. All of our Nimitz supercarriers have been using steam for decades, and we find it pretty reliable. However, the electromagnetic catapults they're running there offer some great benefits to -- obviously, like any new piece, you got to work through the bugs. But they offer some benefits not only to stress and strain on the aircraft; to extend service life and other pieces. I have no doubt we'll work through that just as we work through all of our other advancements and continue to bring it to the enemy when called to do so.

THE PRESIDENT: So, when you do the new carriers, as we do and as we're thinking about doing, would you go with steam or would you go with electromagnetic? Because steam is very reliable, and the electromagnetic -- I mean, unfortunately you have to be Albert Einstein to really work it properly. What would you do?

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Yes, sir. You sort of have to be Albert Einstein to run the nuclear power plants that we have here as well, but we're doing that very well. I would go, sir -- Mr. President, I would go electromagnetic cast. I think that's the way to go. We do pay a heavy cost for transiting the steam around the ship.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. Okay. I like to hear that. I'm actually happy about that answer, because at least, you know, they're doing what they're doing. But that's actually a very good answer.

So, Pat, how are you seeing things over there? What's going on?

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Yes, sir. We have been flying, sailing, and operating everywhere international law allows, just as we have for decades out here in full support of our free and open Indo-Pacific push in company with our Japanese and other allies. We've worked with the Japanese here in Keen Sword, the Australians, Canadians. So a lot of allies out here. And we are certainly their best friend and our ally. And our adversaries, their worst fear. And that's exactly what we want to do is bring peace through strength to this region.

THE PRESIDENT: Right. And you have a six-month deployment, approximately?

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Sir, we're a little shorter than that. But Reagan, as your only permanently forward-deployed carrier, spends about half of the time each year out, and about a half back in getting maintenance worked on it. Each of the sailors and airmen aboard spend three to five years out here with us at a time before going back to a stateside assignment. But we're all honored to be serving the nation out here.

THE PRESIDENT: Right. Pat, why is it that the Reagan is the only one that's permanently deployed of all the aircraft carriers? Why is that? Was it set up for that, or is -- it just happens to be?

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Yes, sir. We have worked a single aircraft carrier out in Japan for decades now. Reagan took that role back in about 2013. I'm sorry -- that's not quite right. About 2016. But it switches out. So, different carriers out here for different periods of time. It was George Washington before us. And then a few of the conventional carriers, you know, going way back to Midway and Kitty Hawk and Independence.

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: So we've been running that for a while. But -- and it's just an infrastructure piece that takes quite a bit of infrastructure to make that work. But we get a lot of presence out of it for the region.

THE PRESIDENT: And do you feel safe in the region? Do you see any hostility? Do you see any aggression? Because, you know, you're hearing a little bit about aggression from a couple of the players. What are you feeling?

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Yes, sir. We have safe and independent operations out here throughout the theater. We do feel safe. There have been a couple of close calls, but in most cases, the vast majority, they are professional navies, and we have no doubt that we can bring that -- we bring the U.S. interest to the theater and expect that to continue into the future.

THE PRESIDENT: That's great, Pat. Well, I want to wish you a Happy Thanksgiving and say hello to everybody in the Navy.

And just in closing, I want to wish everybody a really, really Happy Thanksgiving, and we'll see you when you're back and maybe I'll see you over there.

But it's a great honor to talk to you. I know everything about what everyone is doing. And you're doing an incredible job and you're keeping us safe. And we all miss you back here. But we'll be seeing you soon.

And on behalf of the whole country, I want to just thank you for what you're doing. Very, very special people. Men and women that are just incredible people. You're highly respected. And I'll tell you what: Our country has such respect -- I don't think you hear it enough -- but our country has such respect for you and the job you do.

So, Happy Thanksgiving, and we will see you soon.

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Happy Thanksgiving, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you all. Goodbye.

Great people. They're great people. Okay?

Q Mr. President, are you looking forward to going to Afghanistan or going to the Middle East for any of these?

THE PRESIDENT: We're going to do some interesting things. At the appropriate time, we'll be doing some very interesting things.

Q Do you have a sense of when yet, of when the trip might be?

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me?

Q Do you have a sense of when the trip might be yet?

THE PRESIDENT: I do, but I can't tell you. (Laughter.) You're the last people I can tell.

How is everything in Florida doing? Okay? Weather is good, right? It's Florida. Welcome to the Southern White House.

Q Does the CIA have a recording of MBS demanding Khashoggi's silence?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't want to talk about it. You have you ask them.

Q What about the border, Mr. President? We've seen some court --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the border is coming along very well. It's become very strong. We're getting some terrible decisions from the Ninth Circuit, as usual. I don't know if we've ever had a victory in the Ninth Circuit. We have to appeal it, appeal it. A vast number of their decisions get overturned, generally speaking, and it's a shame. It's a shame. It's a disgrace, frankly. And essentially, they're legislating. They're saying what to do. Some judge, sitting in some location very far away, is telling our incredible military and law enforcement what to do. And it's not right, and it's been going on like that for a long time. And we are doing really well, considering the laws are a disaster. And if we had the right laws, it would be a lot less expensive, and we'd do it a lot easier.

But we don't have the right laws, and we have people interpreting the laws, and they always give us a bad interpretation.

So, hopefully, we've shown some light on the Ninth Circuit. I know that Chief Justice Roberts -- John Roberts -- has been speaking a little bit about it. And I think we've -- and I have a lot of respect for him. I like him and I respect him. But I think we have to use some common sense. The Ninth Circuit -- everybody knows it -- it's totally out of control. And what they're doing, what they're saying, the opinions are very unfair to law enforcement. They're very unfair to our military. And they're very unfair, most importantly, to the people of our country, because I'm keeping them safe.

And you see how we've fortified things, and all of that -- all of that vast amount of fighting that you see going on at the border, it's all taking place in Mexico.

And Mexico cannot believe how tough these people are. The mayor of Tijuana and so many others had said, "Boy, these are tough people." They start fighting right away; they're tough people. You have many criminals in that caravan, and the big caravan hasn't arrived yet. And we're very well fortified. We have fencing and walls like very few people have. We've been able to do it rather quickly. Concertino wire -- Concertina wire. And so many other things are there now

that they didn't have. And they're not coming through. We're not letting criminals into our country. Got to come in legally. You have to come into a process.

And we want people to come in, because I have many, many companies moving back into the United States. They're opening up car plants. They're opening up factories all over the country. The United States is booming. We have the lowest unemployment we've, essentially, in most groups, ever had.

So we have a lot of good things happening. We need workers, but they have to come in legally. We want them to come in, but they have to be people that want to work and want to do a great job for our country. They come in through a merit system. They have to come in.

Right now, under the Democrats, they don't have a merit system. They want open borders, and people can just flow in. You have tremendously dangerous people in those caravans. And we do not want them coming into the United States, and we're not going to let them.

We're throwing out MS-13 and so many others. We're throwing them out of our country by the thousands that got in here over the years, and we're throwing them out by the thousands. And we're bringing back towns, we're making towns safe, and we're doing an excellent job.

But we're getting hurt by the Ninth Circuit, very, very badly. Everybody files in the Ninth Circuit. I haven't seen anybody file anyplace else. They automatically go to the Ninth Circuit. They could go anyplace in the country. And I think we're going to have to stop that somehow.

The judges are going to have to get together, our Congress is going to have to get together and stop it. Because they're taking advantage of our country by filing consistently and always -- just about, that I see -- in the Ninth Circuit. Even our legislation that we did have passed, it failed in the Ninth Circuit; it failed in the Ninth Circuit appeal. It then won in the Supreme Court.

And it's just a shame, because it's really hurting people. It's hurting our law enforcement tremendously. And now that the military is on the border, it's really hurting our military. And frankly, when they hear these decisions, these are professional. The military, the law enforcement, first responders, they can't believe the decisions that are being made by these judges.

This is what they do; they do law enforcement, law and order. And they get these decisions now, and they say, "Who makes these decisions?" They're not into the -- you know, lawyer things. They say, "Who makes these decisions? Who are the people that are giving these decisions that are going to make it unsafe for us," meaning law enforcement and military, "and making it unsafe for the United States?"

So, despite that, we have a very powerful border, and a lot of good things are happening.

Q Mr. President, are you concerned that by not punishing Saudi Arabia more, it could send a message to other world leaders that they can do as they please, and America could be weak in their eyes?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not at all. Saudi Arabia has been a long-time strategic partner. They're investing hundreds of billions of dollars in our country. I mean, hundreds of billions. They're keeping the oil prices low. I see that yesterday, one of the papers, I was blamed for causing traffic jams because I have the oil prices so low. Well, I have the oil prices low because I'm jawboning them and others all the time to keep them low. Nobody ever did that. No President ever did that. And gasoline is now at a very low number. But I actually got even beat up for that, where they said, "The President has the gasoline so low that he's causing traffic jams." Can you believe this one? I said, "That's one nobody ever thought of." So, anyway, no -- but I'll always -- let's have some traffic jams.

We want low oil prices. And Saudi Arabia has really done a good job in that respect. They pumped out a lot more oil than was going to be pumped out, when I called them about four weeks ago. And if you look at oil four weeks ago, it was at 82, 83, and was going up to a 100 a barrel. That would have doubled your prices and even tripled your prices at the car, for gasoline. And instead, you have very low gas prices all over the country. That's because of what I did, and Saudi Arabia helped us.

But very importantly, they're investing billions of dollars. They're buying their equipment from us. And remember this: They don't have to buy it from us. They can buy it from Russia and they can buy it from China. They make very good equipment. They don't make as good equipment as we make; nobody does. Nobody even close. But they make very good equipment.

So they can spend their money in Russia and China and other places, and that is not acceptable.

Q But the CIA, Mr. President, concluded with confidence that MBS was responsible.

THE PRESIDENT: They didn't conclude. No, no, Josh, they didn't conclude. I'm sorry.

Q Do you think they did not?

THE PRESIDENT: Josh. No, they didn't conclude. They did not come to a conclusion. They have feelings certain ways, but they didn't have the report. And you can ask Mike; they have not concluded. Nobody has concluded. I don't know if anybody is going to be able to conclude that the Crown Prince did it.

But I will say this --

Q Do you think he did it?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I don't know. But whether he did or whether he didn't, he denies it vehemently. His father denies it -- the King -- vehemently.

The CIA doesn't say they did it. They do point out certain things. And in pointing out those things, you can conclude that maybe he did or maybe he didn't. But there's no -- that was another part of the false reporting, because a lot of you said yesterday that they said he did it. Well, they didn't say that. They said he might have done it. That's a big difference.

But they're vehemently denying it. And we have hundreds of thousands of jobs. Do people really want me to give up hundreds of thousands of jobs? And frankly, if we went by this standard, we wouldn't be able to have anybody as an ally. Because look at what happens all over the world. But then you can also take a look at Iran, take a look at Syria, where, you know, millions of people have been just slaughtered horribly, horribly. You take a look at what's going on in Iran and the vicious -- the vicious situation that's taking place there, and the number of people that are being killed and slaughtered. You take a look all over the world. We're not going to be able to deal with -- let's not deal with anybody.

The fact is that Saudi Arabia is tremendously helpful in the Middle East. If we didn't have Saudi Arabia, we wouldn't have a big base. We wouldn't have any reason, probably -- I mean, if you look at Israel, Israel would be in big trouble without Saudi Arabia. So what does that mean? Israel is going to leave? We want Israel to leave?

We have a very strong ally in Saudi Arabia. We have an ally that said they did not commit, at the top level -- the Crown Prince, the King -- they did not commit this atrocity. And it's an atrocity. It's a terrible thing. I dislike it more than you do. But the fact is, they've been a very strong ally. They create tremendous wealth. They create, really, a tremendous number of jobs in their purchases. And very importantly, they keep the oil price down. If you want to see a global depression, all you have to do is lift the oil price \$50 a barrel, which could happen very quickly, once we lose that relationship.

So I hate the crime. I hate what's done. I hate the cover-up. And I will tell you this: The Crown Prince hates it more than I do. And they have vehemently denied it. The CIA points it both ways. You know, it's -- as I said, maybe he did, maybe he didn't. But I will say very strongly that it's a very important ally. And if we go by a certain standard, we won't be able to have allies with almost any country. Okay?

Q Who should be held accountable?

THE PRESIDENT: Maybe the world should be held accountable, because the world is a vicious place. The world is a very, very vicious place. If you look at what's happening in China, if you look at what's happening in so many different countries -- I could name many countries. If you look at what's happening with terrorism all over the world.

That's the other thing with Saudi Arabia -- they really are -- they're putting up tremendous amounts of money to actually fight terrorism. Now, if they were a part of terrorism -- and nobody is going to try and justify that; they were a big part of it -- but they're spending a lot of money, and they're opening up. And they're doing a lot of things that are very good. They're really opening up that country for a lot of good.

You know, until this happened, there were a lot of people saying a lot of good things about the Crown Prince. So he strongly denies it. He vehemently denies it. And my policy is very simple: America first. Keep America great again. And that's what I'm doing, and we're doing better than anybody thought even possible.

Yes, ma'am.

Q Sir, you've been talking to the troops. I'm wondering if you can --

THE PRESIDENT: To who?

Q the troops, today --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q I'm wondering if you can tell us: At what point do you want to withdraw troops from Afghanistan?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're always looking to do the right thing, and we'll be seeing over a period of time. But we're looking. You know, I just spoke to Afghanistan, as you know. We're always looking to do whatever is right. We're in very strong negotiations in Afghanistan right now, which a lot of people don't know about. This may be the first. But we are in very, very strong negotiation in Afghanistan. And we'll see what happens. If something happens, that would be a great thing. I'd very happy about that.

I really think the people of Afghanistan also -- and they are good fighters, and they fought for a long time; they fought for a lot longer than we fought. They've been fighting for many, many, many decades. But I think they're tired of fighting. And we'll see what happens. But we are talking about peace, and we'll see if that happens.

Q Negotiations with?

THE PRESIDENT: We have negotiations going on. I don't know that they're going to be successful. Maybe they're not; probably they're not. Who knows? They might be, they might not be. You know my attitude in all of that stuff, whether it's North Korea or anybody else. Maybe they are going to be successful, and maybe they're not going to be. But we have negotiations going on right now in Afghanistan, okay?

Q Mr. President, what is your response to people who say that a phone call wasn't enough for the troops today?

THE PRESIDENT: Well nobody has done more for the military than I have. I took the budget from very little to \$700 billion and then \$716 billion. And I'm now going over to the Coast Guard, where I did last year and I will probably a lot. But we're going over to the Coast Guard.

And just, I really believe nobody -- in fact, a number of generals were on television over the weekend, and just unrelated, but they all mentioned the fact that nobody has done, as a President, for the military, in a long time what I've done. Because I've taken spending, where you had a depleted military, and it wasn't being fixed and it was a mess, and it, frankly, put us in danger, and I was able to get Congress to give us \$700 billion and now \$716 billion for our military.

And I've also done more for the vets than anybody has ever done. I got Choice approved. They've been trying to get Choice for 40 years -- more than 40 years; they couldn't get it -- where a vet can go directly to a doctor now instead of waiting on line for two months and two weeks and three weeks, and amounts of time that are unthinkable to anybody, including yourselves.

So I think I've done more than anybody else, certainly in many, many years, and probably in many decades.

Q Mr. President, are there any updates on the troops that are being sent to the border in regards to the caravan?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no troops. We're going to have a strong border. Our southern border is going to very strong. We're not -- you heard me speaking to some of the folks just now in different parts of the world, and they're so proud of the job they're doing. And you got to have borders. If you don't have borders, you don't have a country.

I mean, the Democrats want open borders, and they want these people coming in. Many of those people are criminals, okay? And have been so adjudged. We know who they are. They have records. They have, some, very substantial criminal records, some very bad criminal records. They're in the caravan.

You saw what happened in Tijuana, where a number of the people said these are tough people. They start fighting; they're starting fistfights. They have fistfights all over the streets. They're starting fistfights. They said, "These are not like normal, innocent people." These are people, you talk to them, and they start a fistfight. I don't want that in this country. Okay?

Q Mr. President, what about the idea that the military may use lethal force against these migrants coming through?

THE PRESIDENT: If they have to, they're going to use lethal force. I've given the okay.

Q Did you authorize them to do that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, if they have to. I hope they don't have to. But, you know, you're dealing with a minimum of 500 serious criminals. So I'm going to let the military be taken advantage of. I have no choice. Do I want that to happen? Absolutely not. But you're dealing with rough people.

You ask the people in Tijuana, Mexico -- they opened with wide arms, just, "Come in, come in. Let me help you. Let us take care of you." And within two days, now they're going crazy to get them out. They want them out. Because things are happening. Bad, bad things are happening in Tijuana. And again, it's not in this country, because we've closed it up.

I actually -- two days ago, we closed the border. We actually just closed it. We're saying, nobody is coming in, because it was out of control. But you take a look at Tijuana, Mexico, and you see what's happening there -- it's really a bad situation.

Q What do you mean you closed the border and nobody is coming in? What do you mean by that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: If we find that it's uncontrollable, Josh; if we find that it gets to a level where we are going to lose control, or where people are going to start getting hurt, we will close entry into the country for a period of time until we can get it under control.

Q You mean the entire border, or (inaudible) country?

THE PRESIDENT: The whole border. I mean the whole border. And Mexico will not be able to sell their cars into the United States, where they make so many cars at great benefit to them --not at great benefit to us, by the way. But at least now we a good, new trade deal with Mexico and with Canada.

But we will close the border. And that means that Mexico is not going to be able to sell their cars into the United States until it's open.

But we're going to either have a border or we're not. And when they lose control of the border, on the Mexico side, we just close the border. And we have a very powerful border. We built a very strong border in a very short period of time. And the military has been fantastic, the job they've done.

And, by the way, Border Patrol and ICE, all of the law enforcement we have involved -- and we have local law enforcement too -- they have done an incredible job. And they've wanted this for years. You know, I'm the first President that's done it to this extent, but they've wanted this for years.

And some of the Presidents, I guess they didn't care, or they wanted open borders. I don't think they wanted open borders. Because most of them, if you go back to 2006, they all approved, essentially, a wall -- a very powerful fence -- which is pretty much the same thing. But in 2006, if you look -- Obama, you look at Hillary Clinton, you look at Schumer, all of the people that are standing up protesting -- they think it's good for them politically. See, I think it's very bad for them politically.

I think the fact that they're weak on the border is very, very bad for them politically. But, you know, I've only been a politician for three years, so maybe they know better than me.

Q Is there going to be a government shutdown over this wall, in December?

THE PRESIDENT: Could happen, yeah. Over border security. The wall is just a part of border security -- a very important part. Probably the most important part. But could there be a shutdown? There certainly could. And it will be about border security, of which the wall is a part.

Q Do you think Secretary Nielsen is doing a good enough job in securing the border?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, she's in there trying, I'll tell you. It's a tough job. I mean, yesterday she gets a ruling that things that we were doing -- a judge that knows nothing about it -- decided to take law enforcement into his own hands, and he gives a ridiculous ruling. So we'll appeal it. But it makes the job harder. We're still doing the job perfectly. But it makes the job harder, and it makes the job more dangerous. Because a judge made a ruling that was shocking. Okay?

Q Just to be clear, going back to the idea of shutting down the border, what would it take for you reach that step and want to do that?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I've already shut it down. I've already shut it down, for short periods.

Q Are you talking about that one border port that closed?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. Yeah. I've already shut down parts of the border, because it was out of control, with the rioting on the other side, in Mexico. And I just said shut it down.

Q What does that look like in practice?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q What does that look like in practice, to shut down the border?

THE PRESIDENT: You see it. I mean, it took place two days ago.

Q Did you have to sign an order? Is there any --

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. They call me up and I sign an order.

Q Can we get a copy of that?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, you don't need it. Don't worry. It's not that big a deal, but maybe to some people it is.

What we want to do is we want to have a strong border. We want to have people come into our country. I want to have a lot of people come in. We need them. But they have to come in through merit, and they have to come in legally. They have to come in legally.

You know, we have a lot of people -- millions of people -- that have been waiting on line for years to become citizens of our country. Great people. They went through a whole process. And then these people come in and they think they're just going to walk in and -- it's a very unfair thing to all of the people that have been waiting on line, in some cases for many years. They've done it right, but they don't think they've done it right, because they said, "Well, how can we do it right, and we go through this very complicated legal process," and they have lawyers and everything else, and then you have people rushing through the border, and they're supposed to stay? It's not happening with me. We've been very tough on the border.

I mean, the problem that we have is that I've created, and helped create, a country that's doing better than it's ever done economically. So a lot of people are coming up here, because their countries are not doing well. And perhaps for a reason. But whatever that reason is, their countries are not doing well.

Okay? A couple of more. Anybody else?

Q How prepared are you for this meeting with President Xi? How are you preparing for it? And how confident are you that you got a deal?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm very prepared. I've been preparing for it all my life. You know, it's not like, "Oh, gee, I'm going to sit down and study." I know every ingredient. I know every stat. I know it better than anybody knows it. And my gut has always been right. And we're doing very well, and I will tell you, China very much wants to make a deal. China has been taking advantage of the United States for many, many years. They have taken out four-, five-, and six-hundred billion dollars a year. That doesn't include the theft of intellectual property, which has been horrible, what they've been doing.

And, you know, it's not a question of preparing. I think I've prepared for this meeting -- I had a meeting literally right in that corner with President Xi. We have a great relationship. I like him a lot. I think he likes me. Probably likes me less now than he did before we did what we're doing.

But we've picked up trillions of dollars in value. And China has lost trillions of dollars in value since I'm President. Trillions. Many trillions in value. And we've picked up many trillions of dollars in value.

And we are a true economic power, far greater than we were before I became President. We are an economic power that is far greater than we were. When we were -- when I took over, we were teetering. We were in bad shape. We were going down to minus-four, minus-five, minus-six percent in GDP. Instead, last quarter, we had 4.2 percent.

And we are doing very well. I can say this: China wants to make a deal very badly --

Q Do you think it's going to happen next week?

THE PRESIDENT: -- because of the tariffs. Because right now, on \$250 billion, they'll be paying us, as of January 1st, 25 percent. And in many cases, they're already paying 25 percent. On the rest that they're not, they're paying 10. But the 10 percent goes to 25 percent on January 1st. And so they're going to be paying a tremendous amount of money, which, frankly, is great for our country. We're taking in billions of dollars from China. We never took in 10 cents from China. They took everything from us; we never took anything from them.

Now, as of already, we're taking in -- right now, we're taking in billions. China is -- people don't understand this: China is right now paying us -- right now, paying us billions of dollars a month. That's never happened before. And soon, they're going to be paying us many, many billions of dollars a month.

But China wants to make a deal. If we can make a deal, we will.

Q Are you worried about Matt Whitaker's finances and his potential (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Matt Whitaker is a highly respected person. And, you know, once I choose somebody, they always go through hell. But Matt Whitaker is a highly respected man. The Justice Department respects him tremendously. I've spoken to a lot of people. And, you know, the press has been nasty to Matt Whitaker.

But I can tell you that he is a highly respected, strong person. And he's doing a great job. Everybody tells me that. He's doing a really great job.

Q Have you done anything, Mr. President, to try to bring Julian Assange back to the United States? And would you want him to face --

THE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't been asked to. No.

Q Would you want him to face charges here? Do you think he should?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know anything about it. I'm not very familiar with the whole situation.

But I would say that if somebody made a request, I guess it's something we'd consider. I just don't know very much about that situation.

Okay? What else? Anything else?

Q Are you interviewing people this week for new jobs in your administration?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. We'll have a few. I'm very happy with my Cabinet and people that work for me, and for us -- really work for the country. We have a great Cabinet. We have absolute stars. But a few of them, I would say, can do very well outside. Everyone is doing well when they leave. That's one thing I'll tell you. Everyone that leaves the Trump administration has come out really well. I'm very proud of a lot of them. Look at Hope -- Hope Hicks is doing a fantastic job. She's a fantastic young woman, and I'm very proud of her. Look how she's doing. She's become a very important person in the outside world. And we have many such people, where they work here for a year and a half, or for a period of time, and they go outside and they do really well, many of them.

So -- and that's what I want -- I want to see. There's always a lot of change. Yeah, I'll probably be changing a couple, maybe a few, but very little. Overall, we're very happy.

Q Are you doing interviews this week for that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. I'm doing interviews this week. I'll do interviews, as we say, in the Southern White House. People like doing interviews here.

Q What jobs are you interviewing for, Mr. President?

Q For DHS?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'll let you know. I'll let you know. But --

Q You could just tell us here now, if you wanted to.

THE PRESIDENT: I know. Maybe I will. (Laughs.)

Q Have you talked to Ivanka about her emails?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, I have, actually. And very innocent, short period of time. Very early on. There was no deletion of emails, like the 33,000, plus probably another 100,000 that Hillary Clinton did after she got a subpoena. There was no bleached bit. There was no anything. Just innocent emails. There were not classified emails. A much different deal. That's another fake-news story. And she did transition out. She was a private person, and then ultimately she transitioned out from private to government. And I believe all of her records are in the Historical Society, the historical records. Much different than the other situation that I've talked about for a long time.

But she transitioned out, but everything is in historical records.

I'll see you over at the Coast Guard. I'm going over to say hello to the Coast Guard right now, which I look forward. And I'll see -- I don't know if you're going, but if you are, I'll see you there.

Thank you all very much.

Q What are you most thankful for, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: For having a great family and for having made a tremendous difference in this country. I've made a tremendous difference in the country. This country is so much stronger now than it was when I took office, that you wouldn't believe it. And -- I mean, you see it, but so much stronger that people can't even believe it. When I see foreign leaders, they say, "We cannot believe the difference in strength between the United States now and the United States two years ago." Made a lot of progress.

Thank you very much.

END 10:35 A.M. EST

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[The White House]
Office of the Press Secretary
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 23, 2018

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
IN THANKSGIVING TELECONFERENCE WITH MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY

Via Teleconference
Mar-a-Lago Club and Resort | Palm Beach, Florida

November 22, 2018

9:42 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, well thank you all very much. And I say to our great, great warriors, "Hello, and Happy Thanksgiving." We're celebrating Thanksgiving over in the United States, as you know, and you're celebrating it wherever you are in all parts of the world. And we'll be talking to you individually.

We're honored to be joined on today's call by great patriots -- you are really great patriots -- representing each branch of the American armed services.

Melania and I want to express our profound gratitude for the extraordinary sacrifices you make to defend our nation. While you are away from your families and loved ones, I hope that you'll take solace in knowing that all of the American families that you hold so close to your heart are all doing well.

The nation is doing well economically, better than anybody in the world. We're the hot nation of the world and it's nice to know you're fighting, and you're fighting for something that's doing well, and that's our country.

I want to begin by welcoming Colonel Stephanie Barton and the men and women of the 101st Airborne Division. These are real warriors. And you have the Resolute Support Sustainment Brigade and they are joining us from Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan, where our soldiers are providing invaluable aid in combined joint area operations throughout Afghanistan.

You are doing an incredible job. A lot of progress has been made and your courage truly inspires us all. We know what you're doing. We watch it. And oftentimes we're watching it every night during the news. And we know it's dangerous and we also know that you've had an unbelievable impact.

Joining us from al-Jaber Air Base in Kuwait is the Central Command -- response and Crisis Response Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force. Lieutenant Colonel Sam Howie, you are really great Marines and you're the embodiment of honor, and courage, and commitment.

It's incredible, the job you're doing. I particularly want to congratulate you on the work you've done to crush ISIS from the air and from the ground. And really it's -- big, big progress has been made. They're very close to being gone and we like it that way. But you have shown incredible courage. And I have to say, you've shown great, great leadership. So, thank you very much. And, Lieutenant Colonel, thank you very much and we'll be talking to you in a little while.

Happy Thanksgiving as well to Captain Pat Hannifin and all of the sailors aboard the USS Ronald Reagan. Great ship. Your ship's motto is one that we embrace every day: Peace Through Strength. That's what the motto is, and we have that motto at home. Everywhere the Seventh Fleet sails, the USS Ronald Reagan is an enduring symbol of American might, American strength, American power and, really, American goodness, in so many ways.

From the United States Air Force, we're joined by the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing, which is supporting Operation Freedom's Sentinel and NATO's Resolute Support.

Brigadier General David Lyons -- thank you very much, David -- is the Commander. And I want to congratulate you and every minute [member] of the 455th for your outstanding work. Not only have you destroyed hundreds of ISIS -- and actually far more than hundreds -- and many, many Taliban targets, but you protect coalition ground forces throughout the region. And you protect them like nobody else. It's incredible the job you do. And I just want to thank you all for being on. And I have to say, General, it's great to speak to you by teleconference and by phone because your reputation is an incredible one.

Representing the U.S. Coast Guard are crewmembers from six Coast Guard cutters and from the shore support teams that are part of Patrol Forces Southwest Asia, which is the largest Coast Guard unit outside of the United States. And I'm actually going right now -- I'm in Palm Beach, Florida, and I'm going over to your local Coast Guard station and we're going to spend some great time with the men and women of the Coast Guard.

They have, from a lot of standpoints, you could call it branding, you could call it whatever you want, the job they've done on hurricanes in this country. They've saved thousands and thousands of people. In fact, in Texas, they saved over 12,000 people. If you think of what that means, over 12,000 people. They went into seas and they went into areas that nobody else would go into. And it was incredible. What they've done in Texas, what they did in Florida, what they did in Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard has really become a symbol of strength and perseverance and toughness and genius, actually. It's purely genius.

So, hello to Lieutenant Nicholas Hartmann who is the Commanding Officer of the cutter Aquidneck. And I also want to congratulate Seaman Christopher Wilson on being selected for "A" school. That's "A," like in "A." That's the best, right? Seaman Wilson, you truly make us proud. Congratulations. That's a big deal. Going to that school is like going to the Wharton School of Finance, if you happen to be doing what you do.

And to everyone on today's videoconference also, I want to thank you all for serving. Today we thank God for the blessings of having you people be our heroes, and you really are our heroes. And your families are back here and they love you, and they respect you and they look forward to seeing you because you're the ones who keep America safe and strong and free. You do a job like nobody else. And it is really great respect that we all have. You are very much appreciated, like you wouldn't believe, by the American public, by the citizens of our country.

I want to maybe start with the Air Force. And I know that Brigadier General David Lyons is on the phone. And, David, tell me a little bit about what you're doing.

BRIGADIER GENERAL LYONS: Our mission here, we defend the two busiest airfields in Afghanistan: Kandahar and Bagram. We support our teammates and our mission set, and then we deliver decisive combat air power across the entire country of Afghanistan.

Mr. President, I know you can't see us right now, but you've got 150 airmen in this room that would love to say Happy Thanksgiving to you. (Inaudible), what do you say to the President?

PARTICIPANTS: Happy Thanksgiving!

THE PRESIDENT: That's great. Well, that's really fantastic. How are things going over there? Are they -- are you looking up? How is looking to you? You've seen it. You've been there a while and you've seen what's going on. You know what's happening better than anybody. How do you find things going?

BRIGADIER GENERAL LYONS: Well, both the Taliban and ISIS are resilient adversaries, but I think that we're doing well. We get after them every single day. Our objective here is to fight the away game. And so what I mean by that is we never want this adversary to reach our shores again. And so every airman here is dedicated to keeping this fight away from our shores. A stable Afghanistan is good for Afghanistan, but we do what we do for America, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, said it better than anybody could have said: "Keep them away from our shores." And that's why we're doing the strong border. As you probably see over the news what's happening in our southern border and our southern border territory. Large numbers of people, and in many cases, we have no idea who they are. And in many cases, they're not good people; they're bad people. But large numbers of people are forming at our border, and I don't have to even ask you; I know what you want to do. You want to make sure that you know who we're letting in. And we're not letting in anybody essentially because we want to be very, very careful. So, you're right. You're doing it over there, we're doing it over here.

And your people at the border, we have the military at the border for the first time. I don't know if it's ever -- or certainly there's never been a presence like this, but we have a very powerful border now. We have the concertina fencing and we have things that people don't even believe. We took old, broken wall and we wrapped it with barbed wire-plus. I guess you could really call it "barbed wire-plus." This is the ultimate. And nobody is getting through these walls. And we're going to make sure they're the right people because that's what you and your family want and all of your families, that's what they want. And that's why we're all fighting. You know, we're fighting for borders. We're fighting for our country. If we don't have borders, we don't have a country.

So we're doing very well on the southern border. We're very tough. We get a lot of bad court decisions from the Ninth Circuit, which has become a big thorn in our side. We always lose and then you lose again and again, and then you hopefully win at the Supreme Court, which we've done. But it's a terrible thing when judges take over your protective services; when they tell you how to protect your border. It's a disgrace.

So, we're winning and you're winning. And I appreciate it very much. And, General, your reputation is an incredible one. Thank you very much for doing the job, and I'll see you back when you're in the United States. Or maybe I'll even see you over there. You never know what's going to happen.

BRIGADIER GENERAL LYONS: Thank you, Mr. President. We appreciate that.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Really great. And thank all the men and women with you. Really spectacular people.

Well, next, let's talk to the U.S. Coast Guard Commanding Officer of Coast Guard cutter Aquidneck. And it would be Lieutenant Nick Hartmann. And so, Nick, tell me a little bit about what you're doing, where you are, and how's it going.

LIEUTENANT HARTMANN: Good morning, Mr. President. This is Nicholas Hartmann, like you mentioned, from Coast Guard cutter Aquidneck. Here in the room we have 14 members from Patrol Forces Southwest Asia. And we're located in the Kingdom of Bahrain, Mr. President. Our mission out here is to patrol the Arabian Gulf Straits of Hormuz and conduct our U.S. Central Command and NAVCENT objectives here in the Gulf.

A lot of our work is partnering and building relationships with the Gulf Coast countries, and so that we have a good standing and resolve here in the Arabian Gulf and in Central Command AOR.

Things, in my opinion, Mr. President, are going very well for us.

THE PRESIDENT: And what do you see in the region? What's going on in the region? How are they feeling about things? How are they feeling about trade? Because, you know, trade for me is a very big subject all over. We've been taken advantage of for many, many years by bad trade deals. We don't have any good trade deals. How are you finding things in the region, Nick?

LIEUTENANT HARTMANN: Mr. President, from our perspective out on the water, sir, we're seeing that there is an abundance of trade happening in the region. There are vessels moving through the Straits of Hormuz and across the Arabian Gulf on a daily basis carrying cargo to and fro. And we don't see any issues in terms of trade right now, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Well, you'll keep it that way. And you know, we want to have good, free trade. And we also want to have fair deals where we can do well too. Not just everybody else. Right now, every nation in the world does well with us; we don't do well with them. So that's changing and it's changing fast. And where you are is a big factor in that, as you know. You've been told and you've been briefed.

Well, I want to thank you very much, Nick. And great job. And again, as I said, there's no brand that's gone up like the Coast Guard over the last couple of years because of what you've done with the hurricanes in this country. People saw things that they've never seen before. The bravery of those -- of your people going out in waves like -- like, you know, record setting. It's been record setting.

The one hurricane in Texas, they say, dumped more water and it was more violent in terms of water than anything we've ever had in the country. And you guys went out there and you did it like just a day in the office. And I really appreciate it. We all really appreciate it, Nick. And thank you very much. Thank you very much.

LIEUTENANT HARTMANN: Thank you, Mr. President. And Happy Thanksgiving.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. You take care of yourself.

Let's go to the Army. Good old Army. We love the Army. We have Colonel Stephanie Barton of the U.S. Army. And, Stephanie, tell us a little bit about yourself and where you are, and what you're focused on and what you're doing.

COLONEL BARTON: First and foremost, good morning and Happy Thanksgiving on behalf of the 101st Sustainment Brigade. We're currently located in Bagram, Afghanistan.

Sir, what we do for the country of Afghanistan, we're the senior logistics headquarters in theater. And it is an away game -- and I will tell you, in order to fight and win the nation's wars, it's because of sustainment and logistics. And you've got highly motivated, true professionals in this room and outside this room that are truly making it happen.

We support -- if it's in the hands of the warfighter, it comes through us, to them. So we support everything from coalition to joint forces, from border to border here in the country, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Good and how are you finding things in Afghanistan right now?

COLONEL BARTON: Sir, it's good. We're truly making the mission happen when it comes to sustainment. We're response for all the strategic, operational, and tactical logistics.

Like I said, if it comes in the theater, we get it in the warfighters' hand. But we have a phenomenal team and I can't speak enough about that. Because a lot of the times, it's the sustainment (inaudible) we're behind the scenes, which is fine. But it's a good team effort and it takes the support by all to make it happen.

THE PRESIDENT: So, Colonel, how many people are you commanding right now, would you say?

COLONEL BARTON: Sir, 10,000.

THE PRESIDENT: Wow. That's a lot of people. That's fantastic, Stephanie. That's beautiful. That's beautiful. And not only is it important what you're doing, but you're enjoying what you're doing. Is that right?

COLONEL BARTON: Sir, absolutely. We truly love it. And I will tell you, our formation is a great mix, sir. We have all the Army COMPOs from the active duty, National Guard, Reserve. We have Army DOD civilians and civilian contractors that -- really, we all come together and make this mission happen.

So, we do hate that we're not with our family and friends today, but I'll tell you, we are a close family here and I'm truly happy to be a part of it. It takes the whole community, from (inaudible) theaters to civilians, to make it happen. And, sir, you would be very proud, because we truly are.

THE PRESIDENT: That's fantastic. We're proud of you. And I'll tell you what, we're proud of your people. And please say hello to everybody. Have an incredible Thanksgiving and know we're taking good care of you. You know, the budget is now at \$716 billion, Stephanie. Right? So, we're getting rid of some of that old equipment that you -- you see what's going in. The best in the world, right?

So, you see a big difference. It's an awfully big difference from what we had before. And it's only getting better. We'll be stronger than ever before. And with people like you, we feel very confident.

So, Stephanie, thank you very much. Happy Thanksgiving to all. And I will see you when you're back.

COLONEL BARTON: Sir, sounds great. We have one last message if that's okay?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Yes.

COLONEL BARTON: One, two, three --

PARTICIPANTS: Go Army!

THE PRESIDENT: That's great. I really appreciate that. I really do. I appreciate it. And take care of yourself. We'll see you all soon. Thank you.

From the U.S. Marine Corps, we have Colonel George Schreffler. And, George, are you on?

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWIE: Sir, this is Lieutenant Colonel Sam Howie. Colonel Schreffler is doing a battlefield circulation right now.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWIE: I'm the executive officer, and I'm here with several Marines who would like to wish you and our fellow Americans a Happy Thanksgiving. (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: That's great. That's great, Sam. Good. How's it going over there?

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWIE: It's going great, sir. Right now, with the Special Purpose MAGTF. We're based in Kuwait. But we have Marines from Jordan all the way up to Afghanistan, and up into Iraq and Syria.

And, every day, those Marines are ensuring that those who do us harm, pays for it. It's pretty amazing watching you -- what you've done with men and women tells the Marines and what they do -- puts a smile on their face every day.

THE PRESIDENT: And how is the progress coming, would you say?

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWIE: I would say the progress is excellent, sir. We've moved throughout those areas and cleared the vast majority of those enemy forces who face us. And right now, I think we're in a good position to continue to (inaudible) the rest of the year or foreseeable future.

THE PRESIDENT: That's great. That's great. I'm hearing very good things. And they treat you good over there I imagine? Right? Do they treat you good?

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWIE: Sir, outstanding. Our partners throughout, including here at al-Jaber Air Base. For the Air Force, they treat us like gold. We want for nothing and today we had a -- I think everyone can agree, a fantastic Thanksgiving dinner here aboard the base.

THE PRESIDENT: That's great. That's great. Well, they should. We're good friends and they've been a good ally. We treat them well and they treat us well. And a lot of good things are happening over there. People are surprised to see how fast things are turning around. But you have one of the great bases. You have something that's incredible and special. And we'll get to see you very soon.

And I will say -- and say hello to everybody else -- but I will say, I want you to have a great Thanksgiving. You are -- what's the time difference? What -- what is your time lag over there? How many hours between, let's say, East Coast?

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWIE: Right now, sir, it's 18:00 in the evening. So it's about an eight-hour difference between us.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. That's a pretty big time difference, right? That's a pretty big time difference. So you've celebrated.

Well, listen, you just take care of yourself and say hello to the Colonel and everybody. And you're special people -- very, very special people -- and we're very proud of you. And give my regards to Kuwait and everybody.

But a lot of progress being made. Your country is really doing well. It's really doing well, like it hasn't done before. So that's good. It's always good to be fighting for something that is working. And unlike a lot of countries, this one works well and it's working better than ever.

So, we'll see you when you're back or maybe we'll see you some other place. Okay?

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWIE: (Inaudible.) Semper Fidelis.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you very much. Thank you. Take care of yourself.

From the U.S. Navy, we have the Commanding Officer, Captain Pat Hannifin. And, Pat, are you on the phone?

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Yes, sir. I'm with you. And from the over 4,800 sailors and airmen aboard USS Ronald Reagan, the nation's only permanently forward-deployed aircraft carrier.

We are currently in Victoria Harbour, Hong Kong, about 13 hours ahead of you. It's still Thanksgiving here. And from all the sailors aboard Reagan, serving peace through strength for America in the Indo-Pacific, we wish you a Happy Thanksgiving.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that's great, Pat. I appreciate it very much. And say hello to everybody, and Happy Thanksgiving to you.

So, the condition of the ship is A1?

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Alpha-1, sir. Absolutely.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, good. Very important. So, you know, we have another big one. The Gerald Ford is going to be joining you pretty soon. How does this compare in size and scope with the Gerald Ford? You know all about that. That's the new one, right?

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Yes, sir. Size and scope. A good friend of mine just left command to that. But size and scope about the same. Certainly some improvements there to the plants and few of the -- and the radars and even the catapults and gear are slightly different as well.

THE PRESIDENT: So tell -- hey, Pat --

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: But we'll push (inaudible) daily.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. Pat, tell me about the catapult system. So on the Gerald Ford they don't use steam, which is the first one that I've ever heard of that doesn't use steam. And I know they have some difficulties, which I'm not happy about. And they spent a lot of money. And I was just curious.

The steam system is tried and true for many, many years, as long as we've had aircraft carriers. How do you find steam versus what they're doing on the Gerald Ford, which is electronic and digital, if you can believe it?

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Yes, sir. All of our Nimitz supercarriers have been using steam for decades, and we find it pretty reliable. However, the electromagnetic catapults they're running there offer some great benefits to -- obviously, like any new piece, you got to work through the bugs. But they offer some benefits not only to stress and strain on the aircraft; to extend service life and other pieces. I have no doubt we'll work through that just as we work through all of our other advancements and continue to bring it to the enemy when called to do so.

THE PRESIDENT: So, when you do the new carriers, as we do and as we're thinking about doing, would you go with steam or would you go with electromagnetic? Because steam is very reliable, and the electromagnetic -- I mean, unfortunately you have to be Albert Einstein to really work it properly. What would you do?

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Yes, sir. You sort of have to be Albert Einstein to run the nuclear power plants that we have here as well, but we're doing that very well. I would go, sir -- Mr. President, I would go electromagnetic cast. I think that's the way to go. We do pay a heavy cost for transiting the steam around the ship.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. Okay. I like to hear that. I'm actually happy about that answer, because at least, you know, they're doing what they're doing. But that's actually a very good answer.

So, Pat, how are you seeing things over there? What's going on?

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Yes, sir. We have been flying, sailing, and operating everywhere international law allows, just as we have for decades out here in full support of our free and open Indo-Pacific push in company with our Japanese and other allies. We've worked with the Japanese here in Keen Sword, the Australians, Canadians. So a lot of allies out here. And we are certainly their best friend and our ally. And our adversaries, their worst fear. And that's exactly what we want to do is bring peace through strength to this region.

THE PRESIDENT: Right. And you have a six-month deployment, approximately?

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Sir, we're a little shorter than that. But Reagan, as your only permanently forward-deployed carrier, spends about half of the time each year out, and about a half back in getting maintenance worked on it. Each of the sailors and airmen aboard spend three to five years out here with us at a time before going back to a stateside assignment. But we're all honored to be serving the nation out here.

THE PRESIDENT: Right. Pat, why is it that the Reagan is the only one that's permanently deployed of all the aircraft carriers? Why is that? Was it set up for that, or is -- it just happens to be?

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Yes, sir. We have worked a single aircraft carrier out in Japan for decades now. Reagan took that role back in about 2013. I'm sorry -- that's not quite right. About 2016. But it switches out. So, different carriers out here for different periods of time. It was George Washington before us. And then a few of the conventional carriers, you know, going way back to Midway and Kitty Hawk and Independence.

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: So we've been running that for a while. But -- and it's just an infrastructure piece that takes quite a bit of infrastructure to make that work. But we get a lot of presence out of it for the region.

THE PRESIDENT: And do you feel safe in the region? Do you see any hostility? Do you see any aggression? Because, you know, you're hearing a little bit about aggression from a couple of the players. What are you feeling?

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Yes, sir. We have safe and independent operations out here throughout the theater. We do feel safe. There have been a couple of close calls, but in most cases, the vast majority, they are professional navies, and we have no doubt that we can bring that -- we bring the U.S. interest to the theater and expect that to continue into the future.

THE PRESIDENT: That's great, Pat. Well, I want to wish you a Happy Thanksgiving and say hello to everybody in the Navy.

And just in closing, I want to wish everybody a really, really Happy Thanksgiving, and we'll see you when you're back and maybe I'll see you over there.

But it's a great honor to talk to you. I know everything about what everyone is doing. And you're doing an incredible job and you're keeping us safe. And we all miss you back here. But we'll be seeing you soon.

And on behalf of the whole country, I want to just thank you for what you're doing. Very, very special people. Men and women that are just incredible people. You're highly respected. And I'll tell you what: Our country has such respect -- I don't think you hear it enough -- but our country has such respect for you and the job you do.

So, Happy Thanksgiving, and we will see you soon.

CAPTAIN HANNIFIN: Happy Thanksgiving, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you all. Goodbye.

Great people. They're great people. Okay?

Q Mr. President, are you looking forward to going to Afghanistan or going to the Middle East for any of these?

THE PRESIDENT: We're going to do some interesting things. At the appropriate time, we'll be doing some very interesting things.

Q Do you have a sense of when yet, of when the trip might be?

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me?

Q Do you have a sense of when the trip might be yet?

THE PRESIDENT: I do, but I can't tell you. (Laughter.) You're the last people I can tell.

How is everything in Florida doing? Okay? Weather is good, right? It's Florida. Welcome to the Southern White House.

Q Does the CIA have a recording of MBS demanding Khashoggi's silence?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't want to talk about it. You have you ask them.

Q What about the border, Mr. President? We've seen some court --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the border is coming along very well. It's become very strong. We're getting some terrible decisions from the Ninth Circuit, as usual. I don't know if we've ever had a victory in the Ninth Circuit. We have to appeal it, appeal it. A vast number of their decisions get overturned, generally speaking, and it's a shame. It's a shame. It's a disgrace, frankly. And essentially, they're legislating. They're saying what to do. Some judge, sitting in some location very far away, is telling our incredible military and law enforcement what to do. And it's not right, and it's been going on like that for a long time. And we are doing really well, considering the laws are a disaster. And if we had the right laws, it would be a lot less expensive, and we'd do it a lot easier.

But we don't have the right laws, and we have people interpreting the laws, and they always give us a bad interpretation.

So, hopefully, we've shown some light on the Ninth Circuit. I know that Chief Justice Roberts -- John Roberts -- has been speaking a little bit about it. And I think we've -- and I have a lot of respect for him. I like him and I respect him. But I think we have to use some common sense. The Ninth Circuit -- everybody knows it -- it's totally out of control. And what they're doing, what they're saying, the opinions are very unfair to law enforcement. They're very unfair to our military. And they're very unfair, most importantly, to the people of our country, because I'm keeping them safe.

And you see how we've fortified things, and all of that -- all of that vast amount of fighting that you see going on at the border, it's all taking place in Mexico.

And Mexico cannot believe how tough these people are. The mayor of Tijuana and so many others had said, "Boy, these are tough people." They start fighting right away; they're tough people. You have many criminals in that caravan, and the big caravan hasn't arrived yet. And we're very well fortified. We have fencing and walls like very few people have. We've been able to do it rather quickly. Concertino wire -- Concertina wire. And so many other things are there now

that they didn't have. And they're not coming through. We're not letting criminals into our country. Got to come in legally. You have to come into a process.

And we want people to come in, because I have many, many companies moving back into the United States. They're opening up car plants. They're opening up factories all over the country. The United States is booming. We have the lowest unemployment we've, essentially, in most groups, ever had.

So we have a lot of good things happening. We need workers, but they have to come in legally. We want them to come in, but they have to be people that want to work and want to do a great job for our country. They come in through a merit system. They have to come in.

Right now, under the Democrats, they don't have a merit system. They want open borders, and people can just flow in. You have tremendously dangerous people in those caravans. And we do not want them coming into the United States, and we're not going to let them.

We're throwing out MS-13 and so many others. We're throwing them out of our country by the thousands that got in here over the years, and we're throwing them out by the thousands. And we're bringing back towns, we're making towns safe, and we're doing an excellent job.

But we're getting hurt by the Ninth Circuit, very, very badly. Everybody files in the Ninth Circuit. I haven't seen anybody file anyplace else. They automatically go to the Ninth Circuit. They could go anyplace in the country. And I think we're going to have to stop that somehow.

The judges are going to have to get together, our Congress is going to have to get together and stop it. Because they're taking advantage of our country by filing consistently and always -- just about, that I see -- in the Ninth Circuit. Even our legislation that we did have passed, it failed in the Ninth Circuit; it failed in the Ninth Circuit appeal. It then won in the Supreme Court.

And it's just a shame, because it's really hurting people. It's hurting our law enforcement tremendously. And now that the military is on the border, it's really hurting our military. And frankly, when they hear these decisions, these are professional. The military, the law enforcement, first responders, they can't believe the decisions that are being made by these judges.

This is what they do; they do law enforcement, law and order. And they get these decisions now, and they say, "Who makes these decisions?" They're not into the -- you know, lawyer things. They say, "Who makes these decisions? Who are the people that are giving these decisions that are going to make it unsafe for us," meaning law enforcement and military, "and making it unsafe for the United States?"

So, despite that, we have a very powerful border, and a lot of good things are happening.

Q Mr. President, are you concerned that by not punishing Saudi Arabia more, it could send a message to other world leaders that they can do as they please, and America could be weak in their eyes?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not at all. Saudi Arabia has been a long-time strategic partner. They're investing hundreds of billions of dollars in our country. I mean, hundreds of billions. They're keeping the oil prices low. I see that yesterday, one of the papers, I was blamed for causing traffic jams because I have the oil prices so low. Well, I have the oil prices low because I'm jawboning them and others all the time to keep them low. Nobody ever did that. No President ever did that. And gasoline is now at a very low number. But I actually got even beat up for that, where they said, "The President has the gasoline so low that he's causing traffic jams." Can you believe this one? I said, "That's one nobody ever thought of." So, anyway, no -- but I'll always -- let's have some traffic jams.

We want low oil prices. And Saudi Arabia has really done a good job in that respect. They pumped out a lot more oil than was going to be pumped out, when I called them about four weeks ago. And if you look at oil four weeks ago, it was at 82, 83, and was going up to a 100 a barrel. That would have doubled your prices and even tripled your prices at the car, for gasoline. And instead, you have very low gas prices all over the country. That's because of what I did, and Saudi Arabia helped us.

But very importantly, they're investing billions of dollars. They're buying their equipment from us. And remember this: They don't have to buy it from us. They can buy it from Russia and they can buy it from China. They make very good equipment. They don't make as good equipment as we make; nobody does. Nobody even close. But they make very good equipment.

So they can spend their money in Russia and China and other places, and that is not acceptable.

Q But the CIA, Mr. President, concluded with confidence that MBS was responsible.

THE PRESIDENT: They didn't conclude. No, no, Josh, they didn't conclude. I'm sorry.

Q Do you think they did not?

THE PRESIDENT: Josh. No, they didn't conclude. They did not come to a conclusion. They have feelings certain ways, but they didn't have the report. And you can ask Mike; they have not concluded. Nobody has concluded. I don't know if anybody is going to be able to conclude that the Crown Prince did it.

But I will say this --

Q Do you think he did it?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I don't know. But whether he did or whether he didn't, he denies it vehemently. His father denies it -- the King -- vehemently.

The CIA doesn't say they did it. They do point out certain things. And in pointing out those things, you can conclude that maybe he did or maybe he didn't. But there's no -- that was another part of the false reporting, because a lot of you said yesterday that they said he did it. Well, they didn't say that. They said he might have done it. That's a big difference.

But they're vehemently denying it. And we have hundreds of thousands of jobs. Do people really want me to give up hundreds of thousands of jobs? And frankly, if we went by this standard, we wouldn't be able to have anybody as an ally. Because look at what happens all over the world. But then you can also take a look at Iran, take a look at Syria, where, you know, millions of people have been just slaughtered horribly, horribly. You take a look at what's going on in Iran and the vicious -- the vicious situation that's taking place there, and the number of people that are being killed and slaughtered. You take a look all over the world. We're not going to be able to deal with -- let's not deal with anybody.

The fact is that Saudi Arabia is tremendously helpful in the Middle East. If we didn't have Saudi Arabia, we wouldn't have a big base. We wouldn't have any reason, probably -- I mean, if you look at Israel, Israel would be in big trouble without Saudi Arabia. So what does that mean? Israel is going to leave? We want Israel to leave?

We have a very strong ally in Saudi Arabia. We have an ally that said they did not commit, at the top level -- the Crown Prince, the King -- they did not commit this atrocity. And it's an atrocity. It's a terrible thing. I dislike it more than you do. But the fact is, they've been a very strong ally. They create tremendous wealth. They create, really, a tremendous number of jobs in their purchases. And very importantly, they keep the oil price down. If you want to see a global depression, all you have to do is lift the oil price \$50 a barrel, which could happen very quickly, once we lose that relationship.

So I hate the crime. I hate what's done. I hate the cover-up. And I will tell you this: The Crown Prince hates it more than I do. And they have vehemently denied it. The CIA points it both ways. You know, it's -- as I said, maybe he did, maybe he didn't. But I will say very strongly that it's a very important ally. And if we go by a certain standard, we won't be able to have allies with almost any country. Okay?

Q Who should be held accountable?

THE PRESIDENT: Maybe the world should be held accountable, because the world is a vicious place. The world is a very, very vicious place. If you look at what's happening in China, if you look at what's happening in so many different countries -- I could name many countries. If you look at what's happening with terrorism all over the world.

That's the other thing with Saudi Arabia -- they really are -- they're putting up tremendous amounts of money to actually fight terrorism. Now, if they were a part of terrorism -- and nobody is going to try and justify that; they were a big part of it -- but they're spending a lot of money, and they're opening up. And they're doing a lot of things that are very good. They're really opening up that country for a lot of good.

You know, until this happened, there were a lot of people saying a lot of good things about the Crown Prince. So he strongly denies it. He vehemently denies it. And my policy is very simple: America first. Keep America great again. And that's what I'm doing, and we're doing better than anybody thought even possible.

Yes, ma'am.

Q Sir, you've been talking to the troops. I'm wondering if you can --

THE PRESIDENT: To who?

Q the troops, today --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q I'm wondering if you can tell us: At what point do you want to withdraw troops from Afghanistan?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're always looking to do the right thing, and we'll be seeing over a period of time. But we're looking. You know, I just spoke to Afghanistan, as you know. We're always looking to do whatever is right. We're in very strong negotiations in Afghanistan right now, which a lot of people don't know about. This may be the first. But we are in very, very strong negotiation in Afghanistan. And we'll see what happens. If something happens, that would be a great thing. I'd very happy about that.

I really think the people of Afghanistan also -- and they are good fighters, and they fought for a long time; they fought for a lot longer than we fought. They've been fighting for many, many, many decades. But I think they're tired of fighting. And we'll see what happens. But we are talking about peace, and we'll see if that happens.

Q Negotiations with?

THE PRESIDENT: We have negotiations going on. I don't know that they're going to be successful. Maybe they're not; probably they're not. Who knows? They might be, they might not be. You know my attitude in all of that stuff, whether it's North Korea or anybody else. Maybe they are going to be successful, and maybe they're not going to be. But we have negotiations going on right now in Afghanistan, okay?

Q Mr. President, what is your response to people who say that a phone call wasn't enough for the troops today?

THE PRESIDENT: Well nobody has done more for the military than I have. I took the budget from very little to \$700 billion and then \$716 billion. And I'm now going over to the Coast Guard, where I did last year and I will probably a lot. But we're going over to the Coast Guard.

And just, I really believe nobody -- in fact, a number of generals were on television over the weekend, and just unrelated, but they all mentioned the fact that nobody has done, as a President, for the military, in a long time what I've done. Because I've taken spending, where you had a depleted military, and it wasn't being fixed and it was a mess, and it, frankly, put us in danger, and I was able to get Congress to give us \$700 billion and now \$716 billion for our military.

And I've also done more for the vets than anybody has ever done. I got Choice approved. They've been trying to get Choice for 40 years -- more than 40 years; they couldn't get it -- where a vet can go directly to a doctor now instead of waiting on line for two months and two weeks and three weeks, and amounts of time that are unthinkable to anybody, including yourselves.

So I think I've done more than anybody else, certainly in many, many years, and probably in many decades.

Q Mr. President, are there any updates on the troops that are being sent to the border in regards to the caravan?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no troops. We're going to have a strong border. Our southern border is going to very strong. We're not -- you heard me speaking to some of the folks just now in different parts of the world, and they're so proud of the job they're doing. And you got to have borders. If you don't have borders, you don't have a country.

I mean, the Democrats want open borders, and they want these people coming in. Many of those people are criminals, okay? And have been so adjudged. We know who they are. They have records. They have, some, very substantial criminal records, some very bad criminal records. They're in the caravan.

You saw what happened in Tijuana, where a number of the people said these are tough people. They start fighting; they're starting fistfights. They have fistfights all over the streets. They're starting fistfights. They said, "These are not like normal, innocent people." These are people, you talk to them, and they start a fistfight. I don't want that in this country. Okay?

Q Mr. President, what about the idea that the military may use lethal force against these migrants coming through?

THE PRESIDENT: If they have to, they're going to use lethal force. I've given the okay.

Q Did you authorize them to do that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, if they have to. I hope they don't have to. But, you know, you're dealing with a minimum of 500 serious criminals. So I'm going to let the military be taken advantage of. I have no choice. Do I want that to happen? Absolutely not. But you're dealing with rough people.

You ask the people in Tijuana, Mexico -- they opened with wide arms, just, "Come in, come in. Let me help you. Let us take care of you." And within two days, now they're going crazy to get them out. They want them out. Because things are happening. Bad, bad things are happening in Tijuana. And again, it's not in this country, because we've closed it up.

I actually -- two days ago, we closed the border. We actually just closed it. We're saying, nobody is coming in, because it was out of control. But you take a look at Tijuana, Mexico, and you see what's happening there -- it's really a bad situation.

Q What do you mean you closed the border and nobody is coming in? What do you mean by that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: If we find that it's uncontrollable, Josh; if we find that it gets to a level where we are going to lose control, or where people are going to start getting hurt, we will close entry into the country for a period of time until we can get it under control.

Q You mean the entire border, or (inaudible) country?

THE PRESIDENT: The whole border. I mean the whole border. And Mexico will not be able to sell their cars into the United States, where they make so many cars at great benefit to them --not at great benefit to us, by the way. But at least now we a good, new trade deal with Mexico and with Canada.

But we will close the border. And that means that Mexico is not going to be able to sell their cars into the United States until it's open.

But we're going to either have a border or we're not. And when they lose control of the border, on the Mexico side, we just close the border. And we have a very powerful border. We built a very strong border in a very short period of time. And the military has been fantastic, the job they've done.

And, by the way, Border Patrol and ICE, all of the law enforcement we have involved -- and we have local law enforcement too -- they have done an incredible job. And they've wanted this for years. You know, I'm the first President that's done it to this extent, but they've wanted this for years.

And some of the Presidents, I guess they didn't care, or they wanted open borders. I don't think they wanted open borders. Because most of them, if you go back to 2006, they all approved, essentially, a wall -- a very powerful fence -- which is pretty much the same thing. But in 2006, if you look -- Obama, you look at Hillary Clinton, you look at Schumer, all of the people that are standing up protesting -- they think it's good for them politically. See, I think it's very bad for them politically.

I think the fact that they're weak on the border is very, very bad for them politically. But, you know, I've only been a politician for three years, so maybe they know better than me.

Q Is there going to be a government shutdown over this wall, in December?

THE PRESIDENT: Could happen, yeah. Over border security. The wall is just a part of border security -- a very important part. Probably the most important part. But could there be a shutdown? There certainly could. And it will be about border security, of which the wall is a part.

Q Do you think Secretary Nielsen is doing a good enough job in securing the border?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, she's in there trying, I'll tell you. It's a tough job. I mean, yesterday she gets a ruling that things that we were doing -- a judge that knows nothing about it -- decided to take law enforcement into his own hands, and he gives a ridiculous ruling. So we'll appeal it. But it makes the job harder. We're still doing the job perfectly. But it makes the job harder, and it makes the job more dangerous. Because a judge made a ruling that was shocking. Okay?

Q Just to be clear, going back to the idea of shutting down the border, what would it take for you reach that step and want to do that?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I've already shut it down. I've already shut it down, for short periods.

Q Are you talking about that one border port that closed?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. Yeah. I've already shut down parts of the border, because it was out of control, with the rioting on the other side, in Mexico. And I just said shut it down.

Q What does that look like in practice?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q What does that look like in practice, to shut down the border?

THE PRESIDENT: You see it. I mean, it took place two days ago.

Q Did you have to sign an order? Is there any --

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. They call me up and I sign an order.

Q Can we get a copy of that?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, you don't need it. Don't worry. It's not that big a deal, but maybe to some people it is.

What we want to do is we want to have a strong border. We want to have people come into our country. I want to have a lot of people come in. We need them. But they have to come in through merit, and they have to come in legally. They have to come in legally.

You know, we have a lot of people -- millions of people -- that have been waiting on line for years to become citizens of our country. Great people. They went through a whole process. And then these people come in and they think they're just going to walk in and -- it's a very unfair thing to all of the people that have been waiting on line, in some cases for many years. They've done it right, but they don't think they've done it right, because they said, "Well, how can we do it right, and we go through this very complicated legal process," and they have lawyers and everything else, and then you have people rushing through the border, and they're supposed to stay? It's not happening with me. We've been very tough on the border.

I mean, the problem that we have is that I've created, and helped create, a country that's doing better than it's ever done economically. So a lot of people are coming up here, because their countries are not doing well. And perhaps for a reason. But whatever that reason is, their countries are not doing well.

Okay? A couple of more. Anybody else?

Q How prepared are you for this meeting with President Xi? How are you preparing for it? And how confident are you that you got a deal?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm very prepared. I've been preparing for it all my life. You know, it's not like, "Oh, gee, I'm going to sit down and study." I know every ingredient. I know every stat. I know it better than anybody knows it. And my gut has always been right. And we're doing very well, and I will tell you, China very much wants to make a deal. China has been taking advantage of the United States for many, many years. They have taken out four-, five-, and six-hundred billion dollars a year. That doesn't include the theft of intellectual property, which has been horrible, what they've been doing.

And, you know, it's not a question of preparing. I think I've prepared for this meeting -- I had a meeting literally right in that corner with President Xi. We have a great relationship. I like him a lot. I think he likes me. Probably likes me less now than he did before we did what we're doing.

But we've picked up trillions of dollars in value. And China has lost trillions of dollars in value since I'm President. Trillions. Many trillions in value. And we've picked up many trillions of dollars in value.

And we are a true economic power, far greater than we were before I became President. We are an economic power that is far greater than we were. When we were -- when I took over, we were teetering. We were in bad shape. We were going down to minus-four, minus-five, minus-six percent in GDP. Instead, last quarter, we had 4.2 percent.

And we are doing very well. I can say this: China wants to make a deal very badly --

Q Do you think it's going to happen next week?

THE PRESIDENT: -- because of the tariffs. Because right now, on \$250 billion, they'll be paying us, as of January 1st, 25 percent. And in many cases, they're already paying 25 percent. On the rest that they're not, they're paying 10. But the 10 percent goes to 25 percent on January 1st. And so they're going to be paying a tremendous amount of money, which, frankly, is great for our country. We're taking in billions of dollars from China. We never took in 10 cents from China. They took everything from us; we never took anything from them.

Now, as of already, we're taking in -- right now, we're taking in billions. China is -- people don't understand this: China is right now paying us -- right now, paying us billions of dollars a month. That's never happened before. And soon, they're going to be paying us many, many billions of dollars a month.

But China wants to make a deal. If we can make a deal, we will.

Q Are you worried about Matt Whitaker's finances and his potential (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Matt Whitaker is a highly respected person. And, you know, once I choose somebody, they always go through hell. But Matt Whitaker is a highly respected man. The Justice Department respects him tremendously. I've spoken to a lot of people. And, you know, the press has been nasty to Matt Whitaker.

But I can tell you that he is a highly respected, strong person. And he's doing a great job. Everybody tells me that. He's doing a really great job.

Q Have you done anything, Mr. President, to try to bring Julian Assange back to the United States? And would you want him to face --

THE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't been asked to. No.

Q Would you want him to face charges here? Do you think he should?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know anything about it. I'm not very familiar with the whole situation.

But I would say that if somebody made a request, I guess it's something we'd consider. I just don't know very much about that situation.

Okay? What else? Anything else?

Q Are you interviewing people this week for new jobs in your administration?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. We'll have a few. I'm very happy with my Cabinet and people that work for me, and for us -- really work for the country. We have a great Cabinet. We have absolute stars. But a few of them, I would say, can do very well outside. Everyone is doing well when they leave. That's one thing I'll tell you. Everyone that leaves the Trump administration has come out really well. I'm very proud of a lot of them. Look at Hope -- Hope Hicks is doing a fantastic job. She's a fantastic young woman, and I'm very proud of her. Look how she's doing. She's become a very important person in the outside world. And we have many such people, where they work here for a year and a half, or for a period of time, and they go outside and they do really well, many of them.

So -- and that's what I want -- I want to see. There's always a lot of change. Yeah, I'll probably be changing a couple, maybe a few, but very little. Overall, we're very happy.

Q Are you doing interviews this week for that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. I'm doing interviews this week. I'll do interviews, as we say, in the Southern White House. People like doing interviews here.

Q What jobs are you interviewing for, Mr. President?

Q For DHS?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'll let you know. I'll let you know. But --

Q You could just tell us here now, if you wanted to.

THE PRESIDENT: I know. Maybe I will. (Laughs.)

Q Have you talked to Ivanka about her emails?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, I have, actually. And very innocent, short period of time. Very early on. There was no deletion of emails, like the 33,000, plus probably another 100,000 that Hillary Clinton did after she got a subpoena. There was no bleached bit. There was no anything. Just innocent emails. There were not classified emails. A much different deal. That's another fake-news story. And she did transition out. She was a private person, and then ultimately she transitioned out from private to government. And I believe all of her records are in the Historical Society, the historical records. Much different than the other situation that I've talked about for a long time.

But she transitioned out, but everything is in historical records.

I'll see you over at the Coast Guard. I'm going over to say hello to the Coast Guard right now, which I look forward. And I'll see -- I don't know if you're going, but if you are, I'll see you there.

Thank you all very much.

Q What are you most thankful for, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: For having a great family and for having made a tremendous difference in this country. I've made a tremendous difference in the country. This country is so much stronger now than it was when I took office, that you wouldn't believe it. And -- I mean, you see it, but so much stronger that people can't even believe it. When I see foreign leaders, they say, "We cannot believe the difference in strength between the United States now and the United States two years ago." Made a lot of progress.

Thank you very much.

END 10:35 A.M. EST

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From: White House: Office of the Vice President (b)(6) on behalf of
White House: Office of the Vice President
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2019 10:36 AM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: Remarks by Vice President Pence at the Warsaw Ministerial Working Luncheon |
Warsaw, Poland

[The White House]
Office of the Vice President
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 14, 2019

REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT PENCE
AT THE WARSAW MINISTERIAL WORKING LUNCHEON

PGE National Stadium
Warsaw, Poland

12:34 P.M. CEST<x-apple-data-detectors://1>

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Prime Minister Morawiecki, Prime Minister Netanyahu, Secretary Pompeo, Your Excellencies: It's an honor to join you for this first-ever "Ministerial to Promote a Future of Peace and Security in the Middle East," and I'm honored to be here with you all.

As I begin, allow me to bring greetings -- bring greetings from a friend to every nation gathered here and a champion of peace and security in the Middle East. I bring greetings from the 45th President of the United States of America, President Donald Trump.

Two years ago, President Trump made his first overseas trip as President of the United States when he traveled to the Middle East. There, the President convened a historic gathering of leaders from 50 nations across the region at what was the Arab Islamic American Summit.

As President Trump said at the time, in his words, "The birthplace of civilization is waiting to begin a new renaissance." He challenged us to work together to meet, as he said, "history's great test to conquer extremism and vanquish the forces" of terrorism.

And I'm here today on the President's behalf, standing before another unprecedented gathering of leaders from more than 50 nations, to say that the United States of America stands ready to work with all those gathered here to answer this great challenge and seize our shared destiny of peace.

We each come from different nations and cultures. Our people speak different languages. They hold fast to different faiths, from the Abrahamic tradition and beyond. But all of us are united in our mission to forge a brighter future of security and prosperity in the Middle East.

For decades, the people of the Middle East have suffered as their homelands have been destabilized and destroyed by security threats that remain with us today -- from sectarian-fueled civil wars to murderous dictatorships.

And just last night, for the first time in the history of the modern Middle East, representatives from nearly every major country sat down and openly and publicly discussed matters of joint concern.

The United States and Poland welcome this outward symbol of cooperation as a hopeful sign of a brighter future that awaits the nations of the Middle East.

We gather together today on the promise of a better tomorrow, and we gather together today because of the common threats that we face. And no threat is more dangerous or more urgent than radical Islamist terrorism and the authoritarian regimes that export it across the region and across the wider world.

Radical Islamic terrorism knows no borders. It targets the United States, Israel, and nations across the Middle East and around the world. It respects no creed, stealing the lives of Christians, Jews, and Muslims. And radical Islamic terrorism understands no reality other than brute force.

For nearly 200 years, stretching back to our Treaty of Amity and Commerce with Oman, the United States has been a force for good in the Middle East.

Previous administrations in my country too often underestimated the danger that radical Islamic terrorism posed to the American people, our homeland, our allies, and our partners. Their inaction saw the terrorist attacks from the U.S.S. Cole; to September 11th<x-apple-data-detectors://7>; to the expansion of ISIS across Syria and Iraq -- reaching all the way to the suburbs of Baghdad. But as the world has witnessed over the past two years, under President Trump, those days are over.

Since day one, President Trump has restored American leadership on the world stage. And in implementing our National Security Strategy, we've taken decisive action to protect the American homeland, promote American prosperity, advance American interests, and preserve peace through strength.

Under President Trump's leadership, the United States is once again putting the security and prosperity of America first. But as the past two years have shown, across the Middle East and across the wider world, "America First" does not mean America alone.

And in the Middle East, the United States is working to build, as the President said, "a coalition of nations who share the aim of stamping out extremism and providing our children a hopeful future that does honor to God."

And the winds of change can already be felt across the Middle East. Israel's prime minister openly visits Oman. Just last week, Pope Francis visited the United Arab Emirates. Longstanding enemies are becoming partners. Old foes are finding new ground for cooperation. And the descendants of Isaac and Ishmael are coming together in common cause as never before. This historic conference is a testament to the truth that a new era has begun.

Together with our allies, the United States has brought the full force of our military to drive radical Islamic terrorism from the face of the Earth.

We've taken the fight to radical Islamic terrorists on their terms, on their soil, and on our terms. President Trump gave our commanders in the field the authority they needed to hit ISIS and drive them back. And thanks to the courage of our armed forces and the efforts of our 78 coalition partners, we've liberated millions of people: Iraqis, Syrians, Arabs, Kurds, Muslims, Christians, men, women, and children. And very soon, the territory of the ISIS caliphate will be no more.

In the wake of these gains, President Trump has announced that the United States will begin to hand off the fight to our partners in the region and to bring our troops home.

This is a change in tactics, not a change in mission. The United States will keep a strong presence in the region. We recognize it will not be enough to simply reclaim the territory of the caliphate. As we enter this new phase, the United

States will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with all of our allies and all those who step up to take a larger role in this campaign.

And working with our coalition partners, we will continue to hunt down the remnants of ISIS wherever and whenever they rear their ugly head. And America will continue to stand strong with all our partners in the region to make the Middle East safe for peace, prosperity, and the advance of human rights.

And under President Donald Trump's leadership, the United States of America remains fully committed to achieving a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

In Syria, President Trump used American military power, together with our French and British allies, to launch precision military strikes, responding to Syria's use of chemical nerve gas against its people. And the United States and our allies will never tolerate the use of chemical weapons against innocent men, women, and children. And we stand ready to deter any further use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime.

With these actions and positions and many others, the United States has been strengthening old alliances and forging new partnerships. President Trump is a leader who seeks to lead the free world through strength. We will always stand with our allies and defend our values.

The United States will never fail to stand with our ally, Israel. We will never fail to call out attacks on innocent civilians or a free and independent press, even as we continue to demand that all those responsible for the murder of Jamal Khashoggi be brought to justice.

But we're here today because of what unites us: Our shared commitment to the advance of security, prosperity, and human rights in the Middle East -- and our shared responsibility to confront the single greatest threat to that bright future.

Last night was remarkable. At the outset of this historic conference, leaders from across the region agreed that the greatest threat to peace and security in the Middle East is the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Forty years ago this month, the mullahs seized control of that country. And every year since, they've supported terrorist proxies and militias -- Hezbollah and Hamas; exported missiles; fueled conflicts in Syria and Yemen and beyond.

The Iranian regime is the leading state sponsor of terrorism in the world. They have bombed American embassies, murdered hundreds of American troops, and even to this day, they hold hostage citizens of the United States and other Western nations.

Iran has brazenly defied United Nations sanctions, violated resolutions, and plotted terrorist attacks on European soil.

As President Trump has said, "The Iranian regime has funded its long reign of chaos and terror by plundering the wealth of its own people."

The authoritarian regime in Tehran represses the freedom of speech and assembly, it persecutes religious minorities, brutalizes women, executes gay people, and openly advocates the destruction of the State of Israel. The Ayatollah Khamenei himself has said, "It is the mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to erase Israel from the map."

Later today, my wife and I will lay a wreath at the memorial to the Jewish fighters of the Warsaw Ghetto. And tomorrow, we will pay our solemn respects to the martyrs of the Holocaust as we make our first visit to Auschwitz.

From the dark years of Nazi occupation, the people of Poland know all too well that anti-Semitism is not just wrong; it's evil. And anti-Semitism must be confronted, wherever and whenever it arises, and it must be universally condemned.

But beyond its hateful rhetoric, the Iranian regime openly advocates another Holocaust and it seeks the means to achieve it. Iran seeks to recreate the ancient Persian Empire under the modern dictatorship of the ayatollahs. As we speak, that regime is attempting to carve out a corridor of influence running through Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, hoping to create an unbroken passage for its armies and its ideology. And it has left a trail of devastation in its wake.

In Syria, Iranian troops have propped up the Assad regime, fueling the dictator's brutal war on his people.

In Lebanon, Iran's proxy, Hezbollah, has built an arsenal of more than 100,000 rockets and missiles, equipped with Iranian-supplied advanced guidance systems.

In Yemen, Houthi rebels fire Iranian-made rockets as they wage war against the government, spreading chaos throughout the country.

And in Iraq, Iranian-backed militias are operating outside of the Iraqi government's control -- targeting American interests, threatening minorities, and stealing vital international aid meant to help Iraq recover from the scourge of ISIS.

And of all Iran's meddling, it's only added fuel to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis across the region. In Syria, more than 5.7 million people have been forced to flee their homes.

In Yemen, more than a million people have contracted cholera, and millions more lack access to clean water. Hunger is so widespread that every ten minutes, a child dies an entirely preventable death.

And in Iraq, even though the ISIS caliphate has been decimated, more than 1.8 million Iraqis still haven't returned to their homes.

The plight of the oppressed in the Middle East -- and the threat posed by their oppressors -- has spurred the United States to action.

Thanks to the courage of our armed forces, more than 5 million people are now free from the grip of ISIS.

And with the generosity of the American people, the United States has provided more than \$9 billion in humanitarian aid and civilian assistance to those affected by the multiple crises across the Middle East -- more than any other nation on Earth.

The United States of America has been a force for good in the Middle East. But under the mullahs' regime in Iran, for their people, it's been 40 years of corruption, 40 years of repression, 40 years of terror, and 40 years of failure.

And for too long, America tried wishing away the dangers of a radical Islamism that is poisoning both of Islam's great Sunni and Shia streams; a radicalism that seeks to crush every form of dissent and divergence.

The previous administrations' desire for peace at any price drove them to strike a devil's bargain with our common enemy -- the enemy of our allies and partners in the Middle East.

But since day one of this administration, President Trump promised to stand with the good people of Iran and stand up to their oppressors. And that's just what we've done.

President Trump kept his word when he withdrew the United States of America from the disastrous Iran nuclear deal. The so-called Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action did not prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. It merely delayed the day when that vile regime would gain access to the world's deadliest weapons.

And remarkably, the universal view of those who spoke last night at this very conference was that Iran has actually become more aggressive since the JCPOA was signed, not less.

The United States re-imposed sanctions that should never have been lifted in the first place and we've launched a new campaign to prevent the regime from financing its trademark terror and destruction around the world.

And since then, the UAE has canceled its imports of Iranian condensate. Bahrain is exposing the Iran Revolutionary Guard Corps proxies active in its country, and is working to stop Iran's illicit maritime activities in the region. And countries across the globe are working toward cutting Iranian oil imports to zero.

But sadly, some of our leading European partners have not been nearly as cooperative. In fact, they've led the effort to create mechanisms to break up our sanctions.

Just two weeks ago, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom announced the creation of a special financing mechanism designed to oversee a mirror-image transaction that would replace sanctionable international payments between EU businesses and Iran.

They call this scheme a "Special Purpose Vehicle." We call it an effort to break American sanctions against Iran's murderous revolutionary regime. It's an ill-advised step that will only strengthen Iran, weaken the EU, and create still more distance between Europe and the United States.

Some argue that Iran is in technical compliance with the narrow terms of the deal. But compliance is not the issue; the deal is the issue.

Today, America's economic sanctions on Iran are the toughest in history and will get tougher still unless and until Iran changes its dangerous and destabilizing behavior. As President Trump has said, "There has been enough suffering, death, and destruction. Let it end now."

The time has come for our European partners to stand with us and the Iranian people; to stand with our allies and friends in the region. The time has come for our European partners to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal and join with us as we bring the economic and diplomatic pressure necessary to give the Iranian people, the region, and the world the peace, security, and freedom they deserve.

We must not let this opportunity slip from our hands. In June 2009, after the Iranian regime stole an election to maintain its grip on power, the previous administration refused to raise its voice when the Iranian people took to the streets in what came to be known as the "Green Movement." It wasn't until the Congress acted that the United States declared its support for the Iranian people.

As a member of Congress, it was my privilege to introduce a bipartisan resolution that passed overwhelmingly that showed the support of the American people, and only then did our administration follow. But soon, the ayatollahs and their henchmen used the cover of the world's timidity to murder, imprison, and terrify freedom-loving Iranians.

The world missed an opportunity last time to confront the regime, but not this time. This time, all of us must stand strong. As Iran's economy continues to plummet, as the people of Iran take to the streets, freedom-loving nations must stand together to hold the Iranian regime accountable for the evil and violence it's inflicted on its people, on the region, and the wider world.

So to all of you gathered here who share this vision for peace and security across the Middle East, I make you a promise on behalf of the President of the United States and the American people: If you stand with us in this noble cause, we will stand with you. Together, we will embrace a shared future, building on the best traditions of the past.

It's remarkable to think that nearly 4,000 years ago, a man was called to leave his home in the Ur of the Chaldeans and make a long journey north. He wore no crown. He commanded no armies. He performed no miracles. He delivered no prophecies. Yet to him was promised, in those ancient words, "descendants as numerous as the stars of the sky."

Today, Jews, Christians, and Muslims -- more than half the population of the Earth and nearly all the people of the Middle East -- claim Abraham as their forefather in faith. And so he is.

And as we gather at this historic conference, I believe, on that foundation of that Abrahamic tradition, we can find a firm foundation for a brighter future for all the peoples and all the faiths of the Middle East. And it doesn't just simply have to be a part of our imagination. It's actually happening, even as we speak.

We need look no further than the Old City of Jerusalem as an example of what could be true for the region as a whole. There, we see the followers of the three great religions in constant contact with one another. We see each faith come to life in new and renewed ways every day.

At Haram al-Sharif, we see young Muslims' heads bowed in prayer. At the Church of the Sepulchre, we see a Christian child receiving the right of baptism. And at the Western Wall, we see a young Jewish boy being bar-mitzvahed. What we see there, we can achieve and live all across the Middle East. That's the vision that President Trump has. And that's the hope and aspiration of peace-loving people in our nation and around the world.

So it's an honor to be with you all today. To all of Your Excellencies who are gathered here; and to our host country, Poland, we say thanks. Thank you all again for being here.

And to all whoever doubt whether peace could at last come to the Middle East, I think we would do well to look to a promise that was made to that man I referred to who made that journey so many centuries ago. It was a promise in those ancient words, that "I will surely bless you."

I believe with all my heart we can claim that blessing anew for all the people of this region and the world for ourselves and our posterity. If we claim it with faith and we claim it together, I believe God will surely bless us with peace. So let us begin. Thank you and God bless you. (Applause.)

END 12:58 P.M. CEST<x-apple-data-detectors://17>

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From: White House Press Office (b)(6) on behalf of White House Press Office
Sent: Tuesday, November 20, 2018 12:35 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: (b)(6) Statement from President Donald J. Trump on Standing with Saudi Arabia

[The White House]
Office of the Press Secretary
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 20, 2018

Statement from President Donald J. Trump on Standing with Saudi Arabia

America First!

The world is a very dangerous place!

The country of Iran, as an example, is responsible for a bloody proxy war against Saudi Arabia in Yemen, trying to destabilize Iraq's fragile attempt at democracy, supporting the terror group Hezbollah in Lebanon, propping up dictator Bashar Assad in Syria (who has killed millions of his own citizens), and much more. Likewise, the Iranians have killed many Americans and other innocent people throughout the Middle East. Iran states openly, and with great force, "Death to America!" and "Death to Israel!" Iran is considered "the world's leading sponsor of terror."

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia would gladly withdraw from Yemen if the Iranians would agree to leave. They would immediately provide desperately needed humanitarian assistance. Additionally, Saudi Arabia has agreed to spend billions of dollars in leading the fight against Radical Islamic Terrorism.

After my heavily negotiated trip to Saudi Arabia last year, the Kingdom agreed to spend and invest \$450 billion in the United States. This is a record amount of money. It will create hundreds of thousands of jobs, tremendous economic development, and much additional wealth for the United States. Of the \$450 billion, \$110 billion will be spent on the purchase of military equipment from Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon and many other great U.S. defense contractors. If we foolishly cancel these contracts, Russia and China would be the enormous beneficiaries - and very happy to acquire all of this newfound business. It would be a wonderful gift to them directly from the United States!

The crime against Jamal Khashoggi was a terrible one, and one that our country does not condone. Indeed, we have taken strong action against those already known to have participated in the murder. After great independent research, we now know many details of this horrible crime. We have already sanctioned 17 Saudis known to have been involved in the murder of Mr. Khashoggi, and the disposal of his body.

Representatives of Saudi Arabia say that Jamal Khashoggi was an "enemy of the state" and a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, but my decision is in no way based on that - this is an unacceptable and horrible crime. King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman vigorously deny any knowledge of the planning or execution of the murder of Mr. Khashoggi. Our intelligence agencies continue to assess all information, but it could very well be that the Crown Prince had knowledge of this tragic event - maybe he did and maybe he didn't!

That being said, we may never know all of the facts surrounding the murder of Mr. Jamal Khashoggi. In any case, our relationship is with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. They have been a great ally in our very important fight against Iran. The

United States intends to remain a steadfast partner of Saudi Arabia to ensure the interests of our country, Israel and all other partners in the region. It is our paramount goal to fully eliminate the threat of terrorism throughout the world!

I understand there are members of Congress who, for political or other reasons, would like to go in a different direction - and they are free to do so. I will consider whatever ideas are presented to me, but only if they are consistent with the absolute security and safety of America. After the United States, Saudi Arabia is the largest oil producing nation in the world. They have worked closely with us and have been very responsive to my requests to keeping oil prices at reasonable levels – so important for the world. As President of the United States I intend to ensure that, in a very dangerous world, America is pursuing its national interests and vigorously contesting countries that wish to do us harm. Very simply it is called America First!

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On the other hand, Saudi Arabia would gladly withdraw from Yemen if the Iranians would agree to leave. They would immediately provide desperately needed humanitarian assistance. Additionally, Saudi Arabia has agreed to spend billions of dollars in leading the fight against Radical Islamic Terrorism.

After my heavily negotiated trip to Saudi Arabia last year, the Kingdom agreed to spend and invest \$450 billion in the United States. This is a record amount of money. It will create hundreds of thousands of jobs, tremendous economic development, and much additional wealth for the United States. Of the \$450 billion, \$110 billion will be spent on the purchase of military equipment from Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon and many other great U.S. defense contractors. If we foolishly cancel these contracts, Russia and China would be the enormous beneficiaries - and very happy to acquire all of this newfound business. It would be a wonderful gift to them directly from the United States!

The crime against Jamal Khashoggi was a terrible one, and one that our country does not condone. Indeed, we have taken strong action against those already known to have participated in the murder. After great independent research, we now know many details of this horrible crime. We have already sanctioned 17 Saudis known to have been involved in the murder of Mr. Khashoggi, and the disposal of his body.

Representatives of Saudi Arabia say that Jamal Khashoggi was an "enemy of the state" and a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, but my decision is in no way based on that - this is an unacceptable and horrible crime. King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman vigorously deny any knowledge of the planning or execution of the murder of Mr. Khashoggi. Our intelligence agencies continue to assess all information, but it could very well be that the Crown Prince had knowledge of this tragic event - maybe he did and maybe he didn't!

That being said, we may never know all of the facts surrounding the murder of Mr. Jamal Khashoggi. In any case, our relationship is with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. They have been a great ally in our very important fight against Iran. The

United States intends to remain a steadfast partner of Saudi Arabia to ensure the interests of our country, Israel and all other partners in the region. It is our paramount goal to fully eliminate the threat of terrorism throughout the world!

I understand there are members of Congress who, for political or other reasons, would like to go in a different direction - and they are free to do so. I will consider whatever ideas are presented to me, but only if they are consistent with the absolute security and safety of America. After the United States, Saudi Arabia is the largest oil producing nation in the world. They have worked closely with us and have been very responsive to my requests to keeping oil prices at reasonable levels – so important for the world. As President of the United States I intend to ensure that, in a very dangerous world, America is pursuing its national interests and vigorously contesting countries that wish to do us harm. Very simply it is called America First!

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From: White House: Office of the Vice President <(b)(6)> on behalf of
White House: Office of the Vice President
Sent: Saturday, November 17, 2018 2:37 AM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: VPOTUS PNG pool 5 - gaggle

From: Andrew BEATTY <(b)(6)>
Date: November 17, 2018 at 4:34:11 PM GMT+1
Subject: [EXTERNAL] VPOTUS PNG pool 5 - gaggle

VPOTUS gagged with the pool for almost 20 minutes.

Some breakouts

Regarding the CIA assessment about MbS , VP Pence said he “can’t comment on classified information.”

“The murder of Jamal Khashoggi was an atrocity. It was also an affront to a free and independent press and the United States is determined to hold all of those accountable who are responsible for that murder.”

“We are going to follow the facts”

But he also added the US wanted to find a way of preserving a “strong and historic partnership” with the KSA.

On question of his loyalty, after a lengthy pause he said “I’m just tempted not to dignified it with a comment, the president and I have a very close, we’ve got a very strong relationship, I’ve been honoured to serve as his Vice President, I was honoured when he ask me to run with him.”

Said the administration didn’t put stock in anonymous sources.

Said he spoke to POTUS and “It came up “

“We had a good laugh”

After the meeting with Taiwan rep he said he would “carry back” proposal for a Taiwan FTA

On China relationship he said “great power competition between the United States and China in this region doesn’t need to mean hostility.”

“We want to see China open up... in a way that respects our international trading system”

He said the message to the Pacific was “we’re here to stay”

Re Nick Ayers VP Pence said he has done an outstanding job ... if the President is going to make any changes he will announce them.

He noted "there is always change after elections happen."

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From: White House: Office of the Vice President (b)(6) on behalf of
White House: Office of the Vice President
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2019 12:08 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: VPOTUS travel pool report #11: Pence gaggles on SHUTDOWN, Iran, ME peace plan

From: Rogers, Katie <(b)(6)>
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2019 11:49 AM
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: VPOTUS travel pool report #11: Pence gaggles on SHUTDOWN, Iran, ME peace plan

On Thu, Feb 14, 2019 at 5:48 PM Rogers, Katie <(b)(6)> wrote:
Warsaw, Poland
2/14/2019

More TK, including non-news on Khashoggi and Middle East
Check against transcript

Mr. Vice President the Iranians today have called this conference dead on arrival. This is certainly not the first comment from them saying that basically all this is the United States and Israel trying to line up other countries to bash Iran. How do you respond to that particularly given that the Iranians were not here and secondly could you respond to the fact that Russia and Turkey organized their own conference?

For 40 years the regime in Tehran has been oppressing their own people and exporting violence across the region. And however they might characterize this conference, what the world saw here is more than 50 nations send representatives from across the Arab world and across the wider world all determined to bring peace and stability to the Middle East. But what I heard over and over again in public discussions and private settings was a common understanding among all of those present that the greatest threat to peace and security in the Middle East is the Islamic Republic of Iran. It really was remarkable last night. A panel featuring representatives of several Arab countries who were asked very openly what was the greatest challenge in the region. Each of them said it was the Islamic Republic of Iran but to have a conference coming together with Israel with Arab nations around the world, we think represents the beginning of a new era. But again I hasten to add this all began during President Trump's first foreign trip where he went to Riyadh and he called on a new alignment, the setting aside of old differences and I believe we're beginning to see that in this conference and we're going to continue to press forward irrespective of Iran's posture or statements.

Mr. Vice President, how close is the US to brokering a Middle East peace deal between the Israelis and the Palestinians and is the US proposal complete at this point?

I know our team has been speaking to parties on both sides on a very regular basis. And sometime next we anticipate being able to lay out a framework but we've made it clear to all we're determined to pursue in good faith peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. It has eluded the region and the world for generations but what people can be clear is while there will be compromise the United States will never compromise the safety and security of the state of Israel but we'll have more details as time goes on but I know those discussions are ongoing

Mr. Vice President as you're here in Poland have you spoken to President Trump about a potential border deal have you heard of anything what have been the conversations?

VP: The president and I have spoken several times during the course of the trip. I know the president is still evaluating the bill that the conference committee has produced. I think he's been very clear that he's not happy with it. Seeing less than 1.4 billion dollars in border wall funding I know is a disappointment to the president but he's considering the bill. There's 23 billion dollars in border security funding including many of the priorities that we requested to address what is a real crisis on our southern border and I know the president is considering that as well as other authority he has as President of the United States to address what is a very real humanitarian and security crisis at our southern border so I think the president is evaluating what's in the bill. He's also evaluating the authority that he has and I know he'll be making a decision before the deadline this Friday.

Katie Rogers
White House Correspondent
The New York Times

(b)(6)

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From: White House: Office of the Vice President (b)(6) on behalf of
White House: Office of the Vice President
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2019 3:30 PM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: VPOTUS travel pool report 14 / resending Khashoggi quotes

From: Gearan, Anne (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2019 3:08 PM
Subject: [EXTERNAL] VPOTUS travel pool report 14 / resending Khashoggi quotes

Hello,

Realizing that a pool report never made it to your inboxes earlier with VP quote from the gaggle on his comments on Khashoggi at the conference, the missed deadline Friday, and whether there is "daylight" between he and POTUS on the issue. It's lost in the ether somewhere – blame bad wifi in a van.

Apologies if you end up getting this twice.

"The murder of Jamal Khashoggi was not only an attack on an innocent civilian, it was an attack on a free and independent press. And at the president's direction, the United States was the first nation to impose sanctions on 17 individuals that have been implicated in that murder. And we continue to stand firmly behind the assertion that all of those responsible need to be brought to justice. The president has been very clear on that point. We've been very clear with Saudi Arabia on that point and will continue to stand on that principle."

Said Pompeo had communicated with Congress last week.

"But the president's point, and our point, is that as we demand justice in the case of the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, we also recognize, as was in high relief at this conference, the important role Saudi Arabia plays in the region, our partnership with them, our partnership to advance peace and security and prosperity for the people in the region is vital to our national interest. And Saudi Arabia plays an important role in the new alignment that you see developing across the Arab world, including with Israel, in confronting and containing and bringing economic and diplomatic pressure on Iran."

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From: White House: Office of the Vice President (b)(6) on behalf of
White House: Office of the Vice President
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2019 7:26 AM
To: (b)(3) CIAAct
Subject: VPOTUS travel pool report 4/ remarks at Ministerial

From: Gearan, Anne <(b)(6)>
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2019 6:52 AM
Subject: [EXTERNAL] VPOTUS travel pool report 4/ remarks at Ministerial

Vice President Pence entered luncheon room 12:43 and took podium at 12:45, after an awkward introduction of "Vice President Michael Pompeo." Pompeo was seated nearby beside Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu. Both laughed.

Event is open press.

Prepared remarks (with phonetic pronouncers of names) follow:

Be advised- there were slight edits to this copy which will be reflected in the VP's actual remarks. Please check against delivery.

Vice President Michael R. Pence
Prepared Remarks – Ministerial Keynote Warsaw, Poland – February 14, 2019

Thank you, Prime Minister More-ah-VYETS-skee. President Duda, Prime Minister Netanyahu, Secretary Pompeo, and all the foreign ministers and diplomatic representatives gathered here today – it's an honor to join you for the first-ever "Ministerial to Promote a Future of Peace and Security in the Middle East."

And to all of you, I bring greetings from a friend to every nation gathered here and a champion of peace and security in the Middle East – the 45th President of the United States, President Donald Trump.

Two years ago, President Trump made his first overseas trip as President of the United States when he traveled to the Middle East. There, the President convened a historic gathering of leaders from 50 nations from across the region at the Arab Islamic American Summit. As President Trump has said, "The birthplace of civilization is waiting to begin a new renaissance." And he challenged them to work together and meet "history's great test—to conquer extremism and vanquish the forces of terrorism."

And I'm here today on the President's behalf, standing before another unprecedented gathering of leaders from more than 50 nations, to say that the United States stands ready to work with all those gathered here to answer this challenge and seize our shared destiny.

We each come from different nations and cultures; our people speak different languages; they hold fast to different faiths from the Abrahamic tradition and beyond. But all of us are united in our mission to forge a brighter future of security and prosperity in the Middle East.

For decades, the people of the Middle East have suffered as their homelands have been destabilized and destroyed by security threats that remain with us today – from sectarian-fueled civil wars to murderous dictatorships.

But just last night, for the first time in the history of the modern Middle East, representatives from nearly every major country sat down and openly and publicly discussed matters of joint concern.

The United States and Poland welcome this outward symbol of cooperation as a hopeful sign of the brighter future awaiting the nations of the Middle East.

We gather together today on the promise of a better tomorrow, and we gather together today because of the common threats we face. No threat is more dangerous or more urgent than radical Islamist terrorism and the authoritarian regimes that export it across the region and the wider world.

Radical Islamist terrorism knows no borders. It targets the United States, Israel, and nations across the Middle East and the world. It respects no creed, stealing the lives of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. And radical Islamist terrorism understands no reality other than brute force.

For nearly 200 years – stretching back to our Treaty of Amity and Commerce with Oman – the United States has been a force for good in the Middle East.

Previous administrations in my country too often underestimated the danger that radical Islamist terrorism posed to the American people, our homeland, and our allies and partners. And their inaction saw the terrorist attacks from the U.S.S. Cole to September 11 to the expansion of ISIS across Syria and Iraq – reaching all the way to the suburbs of Baghdad – and across the wider world.

But as the world has witnessed over the past 2 years, under President Trump, those days are over.

Since day one, President Trump has restored American leadership on the world stage – and in implementing his National Security Strategy, we have taken decisive action to protect the American homeland, promote American prosperity, advance American interests, and preserve peace through strength.

As this strategy makes clear, under President Trump, the United States is once again putting the security and prosperity of America first.

But as the past 2 years have shown, America first does not mean America alone.

And in the Middle East, the United States is working to build, as the President has said, “a coalition of nations who share the aim of stamping out extremism and providing our children a hopeful future that does honor to God.”

And the winds of change can already be felt across the Middle East. Israel’s prime minister openly visits Oman. Just last week, Pope Francis visited the United Arab Emirates. Longstanding enemies are becoming partners. Old foes are finding new ground for cooperation. And the descendants of Isaac and Ishmael are coming together in common cause as never before.

This historic conference is a testament to the truth that a new era has begun.

Together with our allies, the United States has brought the full force of our military might to drive radical Islamist terrorism from the face of the Earth.

We've taken the fight to radical Islamist terrorists on our terms, on their soil. President Trump gave our commanders in the field the authority they needed to hit ISIS and drive them back. And thanks to the courage of our Armed Forces, the efforts of our 78 coalition partners, and the leadership of President Trump, we liberated millions of people—Iraqis, Syrians, Arabs, Kurds, Muslims, Christians, men, women, and children. And very soon, the territory of the ISIS caliphate will be no more.

In the wake of these gains, President Trump has announced that the United States will begin to hand off the fight to our partners in the region and bring our troops home.

But this is a change in tactics, not a change in mission. The United States will keep a strong presence in the region. We recognize it's not enough to reclaim the territory of the caliphate. Working with our coalition partners, we will continue to hunt down the remnants of ISIS, wherever they may hide. And as we enter this new phase, the United States will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with all of our allies who step up to take a larger role in this campaign. Working with those coalition partners, we will continue to hunt down the remnants of ISIS wherever and whenever they rear their ugly head. And America will continue to stand strong with all our partners in the region to make the Middle East safe for peace, prosperity, and the advance of human rights.

And under President Trump, the United States of America remains fully committed to achieving a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

In Syria, President Trump used American military power, together with our French and British allies, to launch precision military strikes to respond to the Syrian regime's use of chemical nerve gas against its own people.

The United States and our allies will never tolerate the use of chemical weapons against innocent men, women, and children—and we are prepared to deter any further use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime.

With these actions and many others, the United States has been strengthening old alliances and forging new partnerships—because President Trump is a leader who seeks to lead the free world through strength. We will stand with our allies and defend our values.

The United States will never fail to stand with our ally Israel. And we will never fail to call out attacks on innocent civilians or a free and independent press. And we will continue to demand that all those responsible for the murder of Jamal Khashoggi be brought to justice.

But we're here today because of what unites us—our shared commitment to the advance of security, prosperity, and human rights in the Middle East—and our shared responsibility to confront the single greatest threat to that bright future.

Last night was remarkable. At the outset of this historic conference, leaders from across the region agreed the greatest threat to peace and security in the Middle East is the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Forty years ago this month, the mullahs seized control of the country—and every year since, they have supported terrorist proxies and militias like Hezbollah, Hamas, and al Qaeda; exported missiles; and fueled conflicts in Syria and Yemen and beyond.

The Iranian regime is the leading state sponsor of terror in the world. They have bombed American embassies and murdered hundreds of American troops, and even to this day, they hold hostage citizens of the United States and other Western nations.

They have brazenly defied United Nations sanctions, violated United Nations resolutions, and plotted terrorist attacks on European soil.

And as President Trump has said, “The Iranian regime has funded its long reign of chaos and terror by plundering the wealth of its own people.”

The authoritarian regime in Tehran represses the freedom of speech and assembly, persecutes religious minorities, brutalizes women, executes gays, and openly advocates the destruction of the State of Israel.

Iran endlessly spews hatred against Israel, our most cherished ally.

The Ayatollah Khamenei himself has said, “It is the mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to erase Israel from the map of the region.”

Later today, my wife and I will lay a wreath at the memorial to the Jewish fighters of the Warsaw Ghetto. And tomorrow, we will pay our solemn respects to the martyrs of the Holocaust as we make our first visit to Auschwitz.

From the dark years of Nazi occupation, the people of Poland know all too well that anti-Semitism is not just wrong; it’s evil. Anti-Semitism must be confronted and universally condemned.

Beyond its hateful rhetoric, the Iranian regime openly advocates another Holocaust and seeks the means to achieve it.

Iran seeks to recreate the ancient Persian Empire under the modern dictatorship of the ayatollahs. As we speak, that regime is attempting to carve out a corridor of influence running through Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, hoping to create an unbroken passage for its armies and its ideology—and it has left a trail of devastation in its wake.

In Syria, Iranian troops have propped up the Assad regime, fueling the dictator’s brutal war on his people.

In Lebanon, Iran’s proxy Hezbollah has built an arsenal of more than 100,000 rockets and missiles, equipped with Iranian-supplied advanced guidance systems.

In Yemen, Houthi rebels fire Iranian-made rockets as they wage war against the government, spreading chaos throughout the country.

In Iraq, Iranian-backed militias are operating outside of the Iraqi government’s control, targeting American interests, threatening minorities, and stealing vital international aid meant to help Iraq recover from the scourge of ISIS.

And all of Iran’s meddling has only added fuel to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis across the region.

In Syria, more than 5.7 million people have been forced to flee their homes.

In Yemen, more than 1 million people have contracted cholera, and millions more lack access to clean water. Hunger is so widespread that every ten minutes, a child dies an entirely preventable death.

And in Iraq, even though the ISIS caliphate has been decimated, more than 1.8 million Iraqis still haven’t returned to their homes.

The plight of the oppressed in the Middle East – and the threat posed by their oppressors – has spurred the United States to action.

And thanks to the courage of the Armed Forces of the United States, more than 5 million people are now free from the grip of ISIS.

And with the generosity of the American people, the United States has provided more than \$9 billion in humanitarian and civilian assistance to those affected by multiple crises across the Middle East — more than any other nation in the world.

The United States has been a force for good in the Middle East. Under the mullahs' regime, it's been 40 years of corruption, 40 years of repression, 40 years of terror, and 40 years of failure.

And for too long, America tried wishing away the dangers of a radical Islamism that is poisoning both of Islam's great Sunni and Shia streams; a radicalism that seeks to crush every form of dissent or divergence.

The previous administration's desire for peace at any price, even at the price of peace itself, drove them to strike a devil's bargain with the common enemy of our allies and partners in the Middle East.

Since day one of our administration, President Trump promised to stand with the good people of Iran and stand up to their oppressors — and that's just what we have done. And he kept his word when he withdrew the United States from the disastrous Iranian nuclear deal.

The so-called Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action did not prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. It merely delayed the day when that vile regime would gain access to the world's most deadly weapon.

And the universal view of those who spoke last night at this conference was that Iran has actually become more aggressive since the JCPOA was signed, not less. The United States re-imposed sanctions that should never have been lifted in the first place and launched a new campaign to prevent the regime from financing its trademark terror and destruction around the world.

And since then, the UAE has canceled its imports of Iranian condensate. Bahrain is exposing the Iran Revolutionary Guard Corps proxies active in its country, and is working to stop Iran's illicit maritime activities in its region. And countries across the globe are working toward cutting Iranian oil imports to zero.

But sadly, some of our leading European partners have not been nearly as cooperative — in fact, they have led the effort to create mechanisms to break up our sanctions.

Just two weeks ago, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom announced the creation of a special financial mechanism designed to oversee a mirror-image transaction system that would replace sanctionable international payments between EU businesses and Iran that don't technically cross Iran's borders.

They call this scheme a "Special Purpose Vehicle." We call it an effort to break American sanctions against Iran's murderous revolutionary regime. We call it an ill-advised step that will only strengthen Iran, weaken the EU and create still more distance between Europe and America.

Some argue that Iran is in technical compliance with the narrow terms of the deal. But compliance is not the issue; the deal is the issue.

Today, America's economic sanctions on Iran are the toughest in history and will get tougher still unless and until Iran changes its dangerous and destabilizing behavior. As President Trump said, "There has been enough suffering, death, and destruction. Let it end now."

For the sake of peace, security, stability, and human rights in the Middle East, the time has come for our European partners to stand with us, stand with the Iranian people, stand with our allies and friends in the region — and we reject the Iran nuclear deal.

We must not let this opportunity slip from our hands. In June 2009, after the Iranian regime stole an election to maintain its grip on power, the previous administration refused to raise its voice when the Iranian people took to the streets and launched the Green Movement. It wasn't until the Congress acted that the United States declared its support for the Iranian people.

As a member of Congress, I introduced a bipartisan resolution that passed overwhelmingly to show our support. Only then did the administration follow. But soon, the ayatollahs and their henchmen used the cover of America's timidity to murder, imprison, and terrify freedom-loving Iranians.

The world missed an opportunity last time to confront the regime, but not this time. This time, all of us must stand strong. As Iran's economy continues to plummet, as the people of Iran take to the streets, freedom-loving nations must stand together to hold the Iranian regime accountable for the evil and violence it is inflicting on its people and the rest of the world.

So to all of you gathered here who share this vision for peace and security across the Middle East, I promise you, on behalf of the President of the United States and the American people, that if you stand with us in this noble cause, we will stand with you. Together, we'll embrace a shared future, building on the best traditions of our past.

It's remarkable to think, nearly 4,000 years ago, a man was called to leave his home in the Ur of the Chaldeans and make the long journey north. He wore no crown. He commanded no armies. He performed no miracles. He delivered no prophecies. Yet to him was promised, in those ancient words, "descendants as numerous as the stars of the sky."

Today, Jews, Christians, and Muslims -- more than half the population of the Earth and nearly all the people of the Middle East -- claim Abraham as their forefather in faith. And so he is.

And I believe, on that foundation of that Abrahamic tradition, we can find a firm foundation for a brighter future for all the peoples and all the faiths of the Middle East.

We need look no further than the Old City of Jerusalem for an example of what can be for the region as a whole. There, we see the followers of these three great religions in constant contact with one another. We see each faith come to life in new and renewed ways every day.

At the Haram al-Sharif, we see young Muslims' heads bowed in prayer. At the Church of the Sepulchre, we see a Christian child receiving the grace of baptism. At the Western Wall, we see a young Jewish boy being bar-mitzvahed. What we see there, we can see across the Middle East. That's the vision that President Trump has. That's what brings us all here today to pursue with sincere hearts.

And so it's an honor to be with you all today. To all of Your Excellencies who are gathered here; and to our host country, Poland; President Duda, we thank you again. And to all who ever doubt whether peace could come to the Middle East, I think we should look to that promise made to that man who made that journey so many centuries ago. It was a promise in the ancient words, that "I will surely bless you."

I believe with all my heart we can claim that blessing anew for all of the people of this region and for the world -- for ourselves and our posterity -- if we claim it with faith and we claim it together. So let us begin. Thank you.

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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

5 August 2019

Amrit Singh
Open Society Justice Initiative
224 West 57th Street
New York, NY 10019

Re: F-2019-00604; 19-cv-00234

Dear Mr. Singh:

This letter is in response to your 4 December 2018 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for "all records relating to the killing of U.S. resident Jamal Khashoggi, including but not limited to the CIA's findings on and/or assessment of the circumstances under which he was killed and/or the identities of those responsible."

We have processed the request in accordance with the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552, as amended, and the CIA Information Act, 50 U.S.C. § 3141, as amended.

We completed a thorough search for documents responsive to your request. On 29 June and 12 July 2019 we released a total of eighty (80) documents in segregable form. At this time, one hundred thirty six (136) documents can be released in segregable form with redactions made on the basis of FOIA exemptions (b)(3), (b)(5), and (b)(6). Exemption (b)(3) pertains to Section 6 of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, 50 U.S.C. § 3507, noted as exemption "(b)(3)CIAAct" on the enclosed documents. Documents originating with other government agencies were also located; these documents have been referred to those agencies for direct response to you. Additionally, it has been determined that information in the remaining document(s) must be denied in full on the bases of FOIA exemptions (b)(1), (b)(3), (b)(5), and (b)(6). Exemption (b)(3) pertains to Section 6 of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, 50 U.S.C. § 3507 and/or Section 102A(i)(1) of the National Security Act of 1947, 50 U.S.C § 3024(i)(1).

This concludes our response to the above referenced request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Lilly".

Mark Lilly

Information and Privacy Coordinator

Enclosures

